

# TNPSC THERVUPETTAGAM

## CURRENT AFFAIRS – MAY 2019

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<b>TNPSC BITS</b> .....	10
<b>TAMIL NADU</b> .....	33
<b>Tiruppur Tops</b> .....	33
<b>Rent Courts</b> .....	33
<b>Anti-Cancer Mushroom</b> .....	34
<b>Grizzled Giant Squirrel</b> .....	34
<b>Anti Defection Law</b> .....	35
<b>Thoppil Mohammed Meeran</b> .....	36
<b>IGST Dues</b> .....	36
<b>AI Drones</b> .....	37
<b>Then Pennai River</b> .....	37
<b>Fruit Show</b> .....	38
<b>100 crores upgrade</b> .....	38
<b>LTTE Tribunal</b> .....	38
<b>Cauvery Water</b> .....	38
<b>Chennai Water crisis</b> .....	40
<b>NATIONAL</b> .....	40
<b>Important Geological Sites</b> .....	40
<b>Global Terrorist</b> .....	41
<b>Start-up India Vision 2024</b> .....	41
<b>VAHAN Database</b> .....	41
<b>One Lakh Meals</b> .....	42
<b>Forgotten Weaves</b> .....	42
<b>Cyclone Fani</b> .....	42
<b>INS Ranjit</b> .....	43
<b>Extinction of Modi</b> .....	44
<b>10 Helicopters</b> .....	44
<b>Darbar Move – Kashmir</b> .....	45
<b>Honey Mission</b> .....	45
<b>INS Vela</b> .....	45



<b>Ayodhya Dispute</b> .....	46
<b>End of Black Listing</b> .....	46
<b>Shortage in Healthcare</b> .....	46
<b>India's first ice cafe</b> .....	47
<b>Vacation Bench</b> .....	47
<b>Rural Startups</b> .....	48
<b>Abhyas Target Drone</b> .....	48
<b>Film Institute</b> .....	49
<b>Project Sparrow</b> .....	49
<b>Child Mortality Rate</b> .....	50
<b>NCERT Syllabus review</b> .....	50
<b>Pharma Pricing Control</b> .....	51
<b>MRSAM Missile</b> .....	51
<b>Drought Advisory</b> .....	52
<b>Exercise Bull Strike</b> .....	52
<b>Mosquito Disease Protection Policy</b> .....	52
<b>Parliamentary Polls 2019</b> .....	52
<b>SIMBEX - 19</b> .....	53
<b>31 Judges</b> .....	53
<b>RISAT 2B</b> .....	53
<b>BrahMos Air</b> .....	54
<b>No Leader of Opposition</b> .....	55
<b>Rifles and Guards</b> .....	55
<b>Women Parliamentarians</b> .....	56
<b>Indigenous Bio-fuel</b> .....	56
<b>New Space India ltd</b> .....	57
<b>Missing Man Formation</b> .....	57
<b>Akash-MK-1S</b> .....	57
<b>Full Body Protector</b> .....	58
<b>All-Women crew flies Mi-17</b> .....	58
<b>INTERNATIONAL</b> .....	59
<b>Japan's Emperor</b> .....	59
<b>Hormuz Strait</b> .....	59
<b>Global food policy report</b> .....	60



<b>Indo-French joint navy exercise.....</b>	<b>60</b>
<b>ADMM plus Exercise on Maritime Security &amp; Counter Terrorism - multinational exercise .....</b>	<b>61</b>
<b>World's military spending report.....</b>	<b>61</b>
<b>17<sup>th</sup> world Economic Forum .....</b>	<b>62</b>
<b>Loya Jirga .....</b>	<b>62</b>
<b>Venice Art Event.....</b>	<b>62</b>
<b>NATO Commander .....</b>	<b>63</b>
<b>Global Registry of Violent Deaths .....</b>	<b>63</b>
<b>New Aircraft super-carrier .....</b>	<b>64</b>
<b>Sri Lankan Easter Blasts .....</b>	<b>64</b>
<b>South China Sea drill.....</b>	<b>64</b>
<b>Fake News .....</b>	<b>65</b>
<b>Vice President at Vietnam.....</b>	<b>65</b>
<b>New President of UN General Assembly .....</b>	<b>65</b>
<b>Japan's fastest-ever bullet train.....</b>	<b>66</b>
<b>UNEP Report on Sand Mining.....</b>	<b>66</b>
<b>Train to Nepal .....</b>	<b>67</b>
<b>Underweight Babies .....</b>	<b>67</b>
<b>Christchurch Call .....</b>	<b>68</b>
<b>Indian Judge in Fiji .....</b>	<b>68</b>
<b>US Immigration .....</b>	<b>69</b>
<b>Privileged Iqama-Saudi Green Card.....</b>	<b>69</b>
<b>Mosquito Disease Protection Policy.....</b>	<b>69</b>
<b>New guided missile destroyers .....</b>	<b>70</b>
<b>Dangerous Huawei Mobiles .....</b>	<b>70</b>
<b>Landing Cards .....</b>	<b>71</b>
<b>Election Result Violence .....</b>	<b>71</b>
<b>Preserving Heritage .....</b>	<b>71</b>
<b>Hot Pursuit .....</b>	<b>72</b>
<b>Asian Track.....</b>	<b>72</b>
<b>Indo-Myanmar CORPAT.....</b>	<b>73</b>
<b>Commercialisation of Arctic .....</b>	<b>73</b>
<b>Chagos Island Dispute .....</b>	<b>74</b>





Anti Venom Strategy .....	74
UN Habitat Assembly .....	75
Colombo Port .....	75
<b>ECONOMY .....</b>	<b>76</b>
FC5 - Potatoes .....	76
Tax Evasion .....	76
Technical Textiles .....	76
Advisor – Finance Commission .....	77
Saccharin .....	77
Co-location scandal .....	78
Swiggy, Zomato .....	78
Chilli Meal .....	79
Class Action Lawsuit .....	79
WTO Ministerial Meet .....	80
Digital Effect .....	80
Under-reporting Bad Loans .....	81
WTO Impending Collapse .....	82
New RBI Cadres .....	82
Third Party Liability .....	83
Chief Risk Officer .....	83
Masala Bonds .....	83
Statistics Department .....	84
Billion e transactions .....	84
RTGS .....	85
SC/ST Entrepreneurs .....	85
IMD World Competitiveness Rankings 2019 .....	85
FDI inflow – India .....	86
<b>SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY .....</b>	<b>87</b>
Shoebox Satellites .....	87
Tianhui II-01 satellites .....	87
99942 Apophis Asteroid .....	87
In-flight internet connectivity .....	88
Aditya L1 .....	89
ISRO's RISAT-2BR1 .....	89



<b>Cargo mission to ISS .....</b>	<b>90</b>
<b>Trans Fat.....</b>	<b>90</b>
<b>Arsenic Respiration .....</b>	<b>91</b>
<b>Supernovas .....</b>	<b>91</b>
<b>Japan's first private rocket.....</b>	<b>92</b>
<b>First Vaccine for Dengue .....</b>	<b>92</b>
<b>Manav Atlas .....</b>	<b>92</b>
<b>World's Smallest Pixels.....</b>	<b>93</b>
<b>Cost Effective Diagnosis.....</b>	<b>93</b>
<b>New Gen Plastic .....</b>	<b>94</b>
<b>Electricity from coldness of the universe .....</b>	<b>95</b>
<b>World's 1<sup>st</sup> parent-wise genome.....</b>	<b>95</b>
<b>Mega Missions.....</b>	<b>95</b>
<b>Ultima Thule .....</b>	<b>96</b>
<b>Woman on Moon .....</b>	<b>97</b>
<b>Ancient Ice age .....</b>	<b>97</b>
<b>Anthropocene Age .....</b>	<b>98</b>
<b>ENVIRONMENT.....</b>	<b>98</b>
<b>Chickpea genetic diversity .....</b>	<b>98</b>
<b>Everest's Garbage .....</b>	<b>99</b>
<b>Media and Climate change .....</b>	<b>99</b>
<b>Drying North East India.....</b>	<b>99</b>
<b>Bajirao.....</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Biodiversity Report .....</b>	<b>101</b>
<b>New Pit Viper .....</b>	<b>101</b>
<b>Asiatic Lion.....</b>	<b>102</b>
<b>Reappearance of brown bear.....</b>	<b>102</b>
<b>Conference of the Parties .....</b>	<b>103</b>
<b>Bioremediation .....</b>	<b>104</b>
<b>Back from the Dead - Twice .....</b>	<b>104</b>
<b>Death of Domestic Yaks .....</b>	<b>105</b>
<b>Rain Loving Snake .....</b>	<b>105</b>
<b>Sendai Framework .....</b>	<b>105</b>
<b>El Nino Modoki .....</b>	<b>106</b>



Illegal Animal Trade.....	107
Environmental Carbon dioxide.....	108
Traffic Pollution.....	108
Traffic Jam @ Thirty Thousand Feet.....	109
Binny – India’s Orangutan .....	109
<b>STATES .....</b>	<b>110</b>
Stucco Sculptures.....	110
Charminar damaged .....	111
Puducherry - Delhi .....	111
Heavy School Bags.....	111
Rani Abbakka Force .....	112
Lift Irrigation .....	112
Zero Pendency Courts .....	112
Char Dham Yatra .....	112
Social Justice .....	113
Unique Women Groups .....	113
Chilika Lake.....	113
Herbivores Census .....	114
Election Violence.....	114
No Onion No Garlic No Egg.....	114
Arunachal Pradesh - Pakke.....	115
Assam Crisis .....	116
Andhra Bulls .....	116
Zeliangrong Tribe.....	117
Chandrani Murmu.....	117
Tapuk Taku.....	117
Andhra Pradesh CM .....	118
Sikkim CM .....	118
Odisha CM.....	119
Aroma Mission – Meghalaya .....	119
<b>PERSONALITIES, AWARDS AND EVENTS .....</b>	<b>119</b>
Goldman Environmental Prize .....	119
Investigative Journalist Award .....	120



<b>Chevalier Award</b> .....	120
<b>PC Chandra Purashkaar 2019</b> .....	120
<b>Robert Govender</b> .....	121
<b>Medal of Freedom</b> .....	121
<b>Ramanuja Jayanthi</b> .....	121
<b>McCain Institute Award 2019</b> .....	122
<b>Sasakawa Award</b> .....	122
<b>The Hindu</b> .....	123
<b>Dag Hammarskjold Award</b> .....	123
<b>Rising Sun</b> .....	124
<b>Man Booker International Prize</b> .....	124
<b>UN's Highest Award</b> .....	125
<b>Abel Prize</b> .....	126
<b>Shailesh Tinaikar</b> .....	127
<b>Lee Jong-wook Prize</b> .....	127
<b>9 Dots Prize</b> .....	128
<b>Global Asian of the year 2018-19</b> .....	128
<b>German Chemistry Prize - Ankur Patwardhan</b> .....	129
<b>Anita Bhatia - UN Deputy Executive Director</b> .....	129
<b>SPORTS</b> .....	130
<b>Marylebone Cricket Club (MCC)</b> .....	130
<b>Asian Road Para-Cycling Championships 2019</b> .....	130
<b>Virgin Money London Marathon 2019</b> .....	131
<b>Asian Youth Women Handball Championship 2019</b> .....	131
<b>Asian Squash Championships</b> .....	131
<b>Boxing</b> .....	131
<b>Premier League</b> .....	132
<b>Player Tracking</b> .....	132
<b>Match Fixing and Corruption</b> .....	132
<b>Women Referees</b> .....	133
<b>IAAF World Relays 2019</b> .....	133
<b>New Badminton Format</b> .....	133
<b>Aravindh Chithambaram – Chess titles</b> .....	134
<b>criiio Campaign</b> .....	134





<b>IMPORTANT DAYS .....</b>	<b>135</b>
International Jazz Day – April 30 .....	135
May Day – May 01 .....	135
World Tuna Day – May 02 .....	135
World Password Day – May 02 .....	136
World Press Freedom Day – May 03 .....	136
Coal Miners Day - May 04.....	136
World Laughter Day – May 04.....	137
International Firefighter's Day – May 04 .....	137
World Athletics Day – May 07 .....	138
World Red Cross Red Crescent Day – May 08 .....	138
World Thalassaemia Day – May 08 .....	138
Time of Remembrance and Reconciliation for Those Who Lost Their Lives during the Second World War – May 08-09 .....	139
World Asthma Day – May 11.....	139
Global Road Safety Week.....	139
World Migratory Bird Day – May 11 .....	140
National Technology Day – May 11 .....	141
International Nurses Day - May 12.....	141
World Mother's Day – May 12.....	142
International Day of Families – May 15 .....	142
National Dengue Day - May 16 .....	142
International Day of Light - May 16.....	143
International Day of Living Together in Peace - May 16 .....	143
World Telecommunication and Information Society Day – May 17 .....	144
Vesak - the day of Full Moon – May 17 .....	145
World Hypertension Day – May 17 .....	145
World AIDS Vaccine Day – May 18 .....	146
International Museum Day – May 18 .....	146
World Metrology Day – May 20.....	147
World Bee Day – May 20 .....	148
World Day for Cultural Diversity for Dialogue and Development 2019 – May 21 .....	148
World Turtle Day – May 23 .....	148



<b>The International Day for Biological Diversity – May 22</b>	149
<b>World Thyroid Day – May 25</b>	149
<b>International Missing Children's Day - May 25</b>	150
<b>Menstrual Hygiene Day – May 28</b>	150
<b>Veer Savarkar Jayanti – May 28</b>	151
<b>The International Day of United Nations Peacekeepers – May 29</b>	152
<b>International Everest Day – May 29</b>	153
<b>World No Tobacco Day – May 31</b>	153
<b>MISCELLANEOUS</b>	154
<b>#OneDay4Children</b>	154
<b>Coronation of Thai King</b>	154
<b>Maharashtra Day' &amp; 'Gujarat Day'- May 01</b>	155
<b>Legal Education</b>	155
<b>SDG Advocates</b>	156
<b>Top Paid Artists</b>	156
<b>Voynich Manuscript</b>	157
<b>Vikalp Scheme</b>	158
<b>World Record Sale</b>	158
<b>Sikkim's 44<sup>th</sup> Statehood Day - May 16</b>	159
<b>Mind Control</b>	160
<b>Nilgiris Mountain Railway (NMR)</b>	160
<b>Murray Gell-Mann</b>	161
<b>SpiceJet – 100 planes</b>	161



## TNPSC BITS

- ❖ Lebanon's capital Beirut has set a new Guinness World Record for the number of national flags raised in a city for 24 hours. It unfurled 26,852 flags.
- ❖ Israel honoured India's former Lt. Gen. JFR Jacob with a plaque on the Wall of Honour at the Ammunition Hill, Israel.
  - He negotiated the historic surrender of Pakistani troops in Dhaka after the 1971 Bangladesh's liberation war.
- ❖ Defence Minister Nirmala Sitharaman attended the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) Defence Ministers' Meet in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan.
  - She also held a bilateral meeting with her Chinese counterpart General Wei Fenghe on the sidelines.
- ❖ The Rule 49MA of 'The Conduct of Elections Rules' lists a six-month jail term and a Rs 1000 fine for false reporting of malfunctioning of EVMs and VVPATs.
  - A Plea has been filed in Supreme Court to declare this rule as unconstitutional.
- ❖ Manchester City and England team forward, Raheem Sterling was named as the 2019 footballer of the year by the Football Writers' Association (FWA).
- ❖ The Election Commission has barred terror accused BJP candidate Sadhvi Pragya Thakur from campaigning for 72 hours in Bhopal. (from May 01, 2019)
  - She was reprimanded for her recent remarks on martyred IPS officer Hemant Karkare and Babri mosque demolition.
- ❖ The Table Tennis Federation of India (TTFI) decided to bid for the 2024 edition of the biennial World Table Tennis Championships.
- ❖ Russian President Vladimir Putin on May 1, 2019 has signed a new law which allows Russian authorities to isolate his country's internet from the rest of the world and create a new national network.
  - Critics of the law says it aims to restrict information and communication online.
- ❖ Sri Lankan President Maithripala Sirisena has announced a ban on covering of the face with burqa, veil or in any manner that prevents identification of the person.
- ❖ Indonesia's President Joko Widodo plans to relocate the capital of his country from Jakarta to outside of the crowded main island of Java due to the island's infrastructure constraint and global warming.



- ❖ The new Rs 20 bank note to be put into circulation has motif of Ellora Caves on the reverse side, depicting the country's cultural heritage. The base colour of the note is Greenish Yellow.
  - It will be signed by RBI Governor Shakthi Gantha Das.
- ❖ The Chinese Government's ban on the import of foreign plastic waste has disrupted the global plastic recycling industry and plastic waste disposal.
  - Developed countries have shifted to South East Asian countries and India to dump their plastic waste.
- ❖ The Medical Council of India has prepared a Draft New Syllabus for MBBS course to be introduced from August 2019.
  - The syllabus for MBBS is revised after 21 years.
- ❖ Fiona Onasanya became the first Member of Parliament in the United Kingdom to be removed from office after a successful "Recall petition" signed by voters.
  - Minimum 10% of eligible registered voters need to sign the Recall petition to remove a convicted MP from office.
- ❖ In its 2019 report, The United States Commission on International Religious Freedom, an independent federal government commission has said that there is an "overall deterioration of religious freedom conditions in 2018" in India.
- ❖ Journalist Saba Naqvi has composed a book named "Politics of Jugaad: The Coalition Handbook" in which she examines the possibility of a coalition government after the 2019 Lok Sabha polls.
- ❖ Shanghai Co-operation Organisation (SCO) Defence Ministers' conclave held at Bishkek in Kyrgyzstan.
- ❖ Bibhu Kalyan Nayak became the first Indian to be appointed Chair of International Hockey Federation (FIH) Health and Safety Committee by the world governing body.
- ❖ Chief of Air Staff of Pakistan announced that the Pakistan Air Force (PAF) will remember February 27 response to Indian aggression as 'Operation Swift Retort'.
- ❖ The Central government has asked the state transport departments to make it mandatory for all Electric Vehicles (EVs) to use the green number plates, irrespective of the year in which they were bought.
- ❖ Former RBI Governor and economist Dr. Raghuram Rajan has authored the book "The Third Pillar: How Markets and the State Leave the Community Behind".
- ❖ The UK has become the first national government to declare an Environment and Climate Emergency.
  - This emergency implies climate and the environment centered policies at the core of all government policies.



- ❖ BSE, formerly known as the Bombay Stock Exchange, has appointed its first independent woman director Jayshree Vyas.
- ❖ India retained its top position in the ICC Test rankings while England remained the number one ODI side in the latest annual rankings.
- ❖ BSNL has become the first telecom operator to start optical fibre-based high-speed broadband service in Pulwama with the launch of 'Bharat Fibre'.
  - This is the first such FTTH (fibre-to-the-home) service deployment in the Kashmir Valley.
- ❖ The 14<sup>th</sup> annual Sino-Indian border trade commenced with the opening of the Nathula Gate with Chinese and Indian officials exchanging ceremonious scarves (Khadas) at the border.
  - Chinese traders come to Sherathang in India near Nathula Pass to sell their items while the Indians trade at the Rienchengang in the Tibetan Autonomous Region (TAR).
- ❖ On May 02, Vice President Venkaiah Naidu released a postage stamp to commemorate the 750th birth anniversary of the prominent philosopher of the Srivaishnava tradition "Sri Vedanta Desikan".
  - In July 2018 British parliamentarians joined together and commemorated the same event in the UK at the House of Commons complex in London.
- ❖ To commemorate the 150th birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi, the Office of the Principal Scientific Adviser and IIT Delhi have come together to set up a "Centre of Excellence for Waste to Wealth Technologies" to implement waste management in India.
- ❖ On May 4, 1979 Margaret Thatcher became the first woman to be elected as Prime Minister of the United Kingdom.
- ❖ As a part of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), LIC Housing Finance Ltd (LIC HFL) in association with Lok Bharti Education Society unveiled a skilling centre named "UDYAM" in Bangalore.
- ❖ The International Cricket Council (ICC) has unveiled an expanded men's Twenty 20 International team rankings with 80 teams.
  - India with 260 points stands fifth in the latest list. Pakistan tops the list.
- ❖ The Ministry of Water Resources has reported that the water storage level available in 91 major Indian reservoirs for week ending on 2 May 2019 was 40.592 BCM (Billion cubic meters).
  - This is only 25% of the total storage capacity of these reservoirs.





- ❖ The Chinese electronics giant Huawei has surpassed Apple to become the No. 2 smartphone vendor worldwide, according to statistics from the International Data Corp.
- ❖ For the second year in a row, Iraq has become India's top crude oil supplier.
  - Iraq supplied more than a fifth of the India's oil needs in 2018-19 fiscal year (46.61 million tone).
- ❖ The Ministry of Defence has awarded Garden Reach Shipbuilders & Engineers Limited (GRSE), Kolkata a contract worth Rs. 6,000 crores to build eight Anti-Submarine Warfare Shallow Water Crafts (ASWSWCs) for Indian Navy.
  - These vessels will have the capability to interdict/ destroy sub surface targets in coastal waters.
- ❖ The Swedish Academy, which awards the Nobel Literature Prize has appointed Professor Mats Malm as its new permanent secretary. He heads the committee to announce Nobel Prize for literature for both 2018 and 2019.
  - Nobel Prize for literature was not awarded in 2018 in for the first time in 70 years.
- ❖ 18-year-old girl, Bandana Nepal from Nepal danced continuously for 126 hours and set a Guinness World Records on "Longest Dancing Marathon by an Individual".
  - She overtook Indian Kalamandalam Hemlatha, who danced continuously for 123 hours and 15 minutes in 2011.
- ❖ According to a report on the National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG) website, the Modi government has only finished 10 of the 100 sewage infrastructure projects commissioned after 2015 under the Namami Gange mission.
- ❖ The National Company Law Appellate Tribunal (NCLAT) has allowed the banks to declare the accounts of IL&FS and its group companies as non-performing assets (NPA) if they have defaulted on payments.
  - NPA is a loan or advance for which the principal or interest payment remains unpaid /overdue for a period of 90 days.
- ❖ Goods and Services Tax (GST) collections has hit an all-time high of Rs. 1.13 lakh crore in April 2019.
  - The government had collected Rs. 1.06 lakh crore in March.
- ❖ State Bank of India (SBI) has linked its interest rate on savings account and short-term loans to Reserve Bank of India's (RBI) repo rate.
  - Rate of Interest is 3.5% for savings accounts with balance less than 1 lakh and 3.25% for accounts with balance more than 1 lakh.



- ❖ The 16<sup>th</sup> Ministerial Meeting of Asia Cooperation Dialogue (ACD) was held in Doha, Qatar. The theme of the meeting was “Partners in Progress”.
- ❖ The Gujarat Shops and Establishment Amendment Act, 1948 has been amended to allow 24 hours operation of shops, commercial establishments and businesses, all restaurants on national and state highways, petrol pump, hospitals, hotels.
- ❖ RBI has imposed penalties on 5 prepaid payment instrument (PPI) issuers including Vodafone m-pesa, Western Union, Money Gram for non-compliance of regulatory guidelines.
- ❖ National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS) has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Indian Medical Association for imparting ‘skill education’ in Para Medical Courses to the learners.
  - NIOS has 2.71 million students at Secondary, Senior Secondary & Vocational levels which makes it the largest open schooling system in the world.
- ❖ The Green Rating for Integrated Habitat Assessment (GRIHA) Council has launched a rating tool ‘GRIHA for Existing Day Schools’ to evaluate the environmental performance of existing schools across India.
  - It aims to educate students and teachers about the environmental impact of their schools on environment.
- ❖ North Korea fired several short-range projectiles into Sea of Japan under the command of North Korean leader Kim Jong-un.
- ❖ Researchers at Tata Institute of Fundamental Research (TIFR), Mumbai have identified a new function for the stress buster Serotonin (Chemical name: 5-hydroxytryptamine (5-HT)).
  - It may help to treat neurological decline.
- ❖ For the first time, one of the rarest oil paintings of Rabindranath Tagore “Three Witches from Macbeth” will be put on display at the Abanindranath Tagore gallery in Rabindra Barati University campus, Calcutta.
  - The visible storage gallery will be inaugurated on the occasion of Tagore’s 158th birth anniversary celebrations.
- ❖ On April 17, Indonesia held its presidential and legislative elections, with around 192.8 million people eligible to vote in more than 800,000 polling stations.
  - According to figures from the Indonesian National Election Commission (KPU) more than 311 election officials have died and another 2,232 people have fallen sick after helping to administer the election.
- ❖ Panamanians have elected Democratic Revolutionary Change party candidate ‘Laurentino Cortizo’ as their President in the recently concluded elections.



- ❖ Two Myanmar Reuters journalists Wa Lone and Kyaw Soe Oo who were jailed for more than 500 days for their reporting on the Rohingya crisis have been freed.
- ❖ Genetic studies on the people of the Lakshadweep archipelago was done by a team of CSIR-Centre for Cellular and Molecular Biology (CCMB), for the first time.
  - It has found that a majority of human ancestry in Lakshadweep is largely derived from South Asia with minor influences from East and West Eurasia.
- ❖ Justice DY Chandrachud has written to the Supreme Court's 3-judge inhouse committee, headed by Justice SA Bobde, not to proceed with the “ex-parte” inquiry into a dismissed SC woman employee's sexual harassment complaint against CJI Ranjan Gogoi.
  - “ex parte” means a legal proceeding brought by one person in the absence of and without representation or notification of other parties.
- ❖ Basava Jayanti 2019 was observed on May 7, 2019. Basava Jayanthi is the birthday of Basavanna, a Hindu Kannada poet of the 12th century.
- ❖ India was re-elected as an observer to intergovernmental forum Arctic Council at the 11th Arctic Council ministerial meeting held at Rovaniemi, Finland.
- ❖ Iran said that it will reduce some of its commitments to stop its uranium enrichment program and nuclear deal.
  - This is in response to the United States’ decision to withdraw from the 2015 multilateral deal known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).
- ❖ The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has decided to enhance the housing loan limits for Regional Rural Banks (RRBs) and Small Finance Banks (SFBs) for eligibility under priority sector lending.
  - This is expected to give them a level playing field with other Scheduled Commercial Banks.
- ❖ The report of FICCI (The Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry) titled “India Inbound Tourism: Unlocking the Opportunity” published that India’s MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conferences and Exhibition) tourism is growing at 8 per cent a year.
  - FICCI is an association of business organisations in India established in 1927 on the advice of Mahatma Gandhi by GD Birla and Purushottam Das Thakurdas.
- ❖ India inked Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with ISE Foods, Japan’s largest egg producer.
  - The objective is to improve the quality of eggs, disease diagnosis and waste management in poultry farms across India.



- ❖ Engineers from the Indian Institute of Technology Bombay (IIT Bombay) have developed a microprocessor called AJIT which could reduce the country's dependence on imports.
  - For related read please go here <https://www.tnpscthervupettagam.com/indias-first-indigenous-microprocessor/> (News Dated 10.11.18)
- ❖ IRS Officer and former Narcotics Commissioner of India, Jagjit Pavadia has been re-elected by the UN Economic and Social Council to a five-year term on International Narcotics Control Board (INCB).
  - Established in 1961, INCB is the independent and quasi-judicial control organ for the implementation of the United Nations drug conventions.
- ❖ A report by a team of Australian and Bangladeshi researchers in the journal "Science of The Total Environment" has warned that climate change and rising sea levels may wipe out Sunderbans
  - Sunderbans marshy land hosts the world's largest mangrove forest and a rich ecosystem supporting several hundred animal species, including the endangered Royal Bengal tiger.
- ❖ The Volleyball Federation of India has appointed Serbian Dragan Mihailovic as head coach of the men's national team in a move linked to the long-term goal of Olympic Games qualification.
- ❖ India, Brazil and South Africa (IBSA) Sherpas meeting was held in Cochin, Kerala from May 3 to May 5, 2019.
  - Before IBSA Sherpas meeting, the 9th IBSA trilateral Ministerial Meeting was also conducted at the same venue.
- ❖ The theme of May 1 Labor Day 2019 is "Uniting Workers for Social and Economic Advancement".
- ❖ Asian Development Bank (ADB) launched 5\$ billion Action Plan for Healthy Oceans and Sustainable Blue Economies for the Asia and Pacific region.
- ❖ The US Air Force Research Laboratory tested a laser system called Self-Protect High Energy Laser Demonstrator (SHiELD) at the US Army's White Sands Missile range in New Mexico.
  - It successfully shot down multiple air-launched missiles while in flight.
- ❖ Reliance Industries will acquire 259 years old iconic British toy-maker Hamleys for around Rs 620 crore.
  - Hamleys was started with a single-store shop called "Noah's Ark" in 1760.
- ❖ Pakistan cricket team's former captain and star all-rounder Shahid Afridi released his autobiography, titled 'Game Changer'. The book is co-authored by Afridi and journalist Wajahat S Khan.



- ❖ A team of researchers from the University of Pittsburgh have used genetically modified viruses to treat a patient fighting an antibiotic-resistant infection for the first time.
  - It was published in the journal Nature Medicine on 8th May 2019.
- ❖ A multinational effort led by scientists of Iceland have devised a technique to convert carbon dioxide into the rock and thus cleaning the air of harmful emissions that cause global warming.
  - Their technique mimics the natural process of carbon being absorbed by basalt rock that usually takes place over thousands of years.
- ❖ Australian flight carrier, Qantas operated the world's first zero-waste commercial flight named QF739 from Sydney to Adelaide which disposed of all waste through compost, reuse or recycles.
- ❖ The Union Territory of Lakshadweep has 'recruited' three pairs of barn owls (*Tyto alba*) from Kerala under a rodent management programme to fight the dangers of rat population which is destroying its coconut yield.
- ❖ Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC) has organised a meet in Kochi for 33 members from Asia Pacific region of the World Customs Organization (WCO). The WCO has called for enhancing cross border trade and international logistics.
  - Head quartered at Brussels, the WCO has 183 member countries and manages around 98% of world trade.
- ❖ According to the AFRASIA Bank Global Wealth Migration Review 2019, about 5,000 Indian HNI (High Net Worth Individuals) or 2 per cent of India's super rich migrated from the country during 2018.
  - Since 2008, Australia has emerged as the top destination for global millionaire migrants (12,000), followed by US (10,000) and Canada (4000).
- ❖ The Supreme Court collegium led by CJI Ranjan Gogoi recommended the names of Justices Aniruddha Bose and A.S. Bopanna to the top court but the government disapproved both of their the elevation.
  - The government's disapproval was rejected by CJI and he pushed for the full sanctioned judicial strength of Supreme court at 31.
- ❖ According to The Indian Staffing Federation (ISF) Indian tech industry will add another 3 million new jobs in the next five years. ISF is the apex body for the 'flexi' working industry.
  - New jobs are expected in the fields of artificial intelligence (AI), machine learning, Internet of things (IOT), data science, analytics, big data, blockchain and augmented reality.





- ❖ The All India Football Federation has recommended the appointment of Former Croatia international Igor Stimac appointed Indian men's football team coach.
  - 51 years old Stimac, was an integral part of "golden generation" of Croatia that finished third at the 1998 FIFA World Cup.
- ❖ The Chhattisgarh police for the first time has inducted women commandos in the District Reserve Guard (DRG) which is its frontline anti-Naxal force.
  - Comprising 30 women led by a Deputy Superintendent of Police (DSP) Dineshwari Nand, they have received extensive training in jungle combat.
- ❖ Singapore recently reported the first ever case of the **Monkeypox Virus** brought in by a Nigerian who arrived in Singapore.
  - This spreads by wild animals or through the consumption of bush meat of monkeys, bats, rodents, etc. Bush meat is a popular source of protein in some African countries.
- ❖ Pope Francis issued a historic document declaring that those who suspect sexual abuse in the Catholic Church are obliged to report it immediately to the church authorities.
  - This initiative by Pope is called 'Motu Proprio'. In Catholic language it means a document issued and signed by the Pope, depicting his initiative.
- ❖ The hearing of Ayodhya land dispute case has been postponed by the Supreme Court to August 15, 2019. For more on this: <https://www.tnpscthervupettagam.com/ayodhya-dispute/>
- ❖ Ireland on May 9, 2019 became the second nation in the world after Britain to declare a climate emergency. Britain was the first.
  - The declaration calls for the government to fast track legislative changes and for a drastic cut down of greenhouse gas emissions by 2030.
- ❖ A report published in Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA) found that the chemicals used in sunscreen to absorb sun's radiation tend to enter the blood stream which may become harmful in large levels.
  - The chemicals are avobenzene, octocrylene, oxybenzone, ecamsule.
- ❖ Islamic State (IS) has claimed for the first time that it has established a "province" in India after a clash between an alleged member of IS and security forces in the Kashmir region.
  - They have named the province "Wilayah of Hind". Though this a dubious claim, Indian security experts have warned against complacency.
- ❖ Jeff Bezos who heads both Amazon and the space company Blue Origin, unveiled a lunar lander named Blue Moon.



- It would be used to transport equipment and possibly human beings to the south pole of the Moon by 2024.
- ❖ According to a report by Standard Chartered, **India, Bangladesh, Vietnam, Myanmar and the Philippines** are expected to sustain a growth rate of nearly 7 percent throughout the 2020s.
  - A 7 percent growth implies doubling of GDP every 10 years and rise in per-capita income.
- ❖ On 11 May, 2019 Boeing handed over to the Indian Air Force (IAF) the first of the 22 Apache Guardian helicopters that was ordered by India.
  - Air Marshal A S Butola travelled to Boeing's helicopter production facility at Mesa, Arizona to attend the handing over ceremony.
- ❖ The Indian Army is commemorating this year as the 'Year of Next of Kin'.
- ❖ The world's first exclusive women's cricket magazine "CRICZONE" released with Indian women's cricket team vice-captain Smriti Mandhana featured as the cover story.
- ❖ The 17<sup>th</sup> edition of India's most prestigious international motorsport event, Desert Storm Rally 2019 held in Rajasthan.
- ❖ According to Britain's Sunday Times Rich List 2019, Indian-origin Billionaire Hinduja brothers (Sri and Gopi Hinduja) with 22 billion pounds worth of assets were named as wealthiest people in the UK continuously for a third time.
  - Zimbabwe-born Valerie Moran became first black female entrepreneur ever to be ranked in the Times Rich List.
- ❖ The theme of National Technology Day (May 11, 2019) is: "Science for People and People for Science".
- ❖ The Home Ministry has cancelled the FCRA licence of Infosys Foundation after a repeated request was made by the not-for-profit initiative of the IT company.
  - The Foreign Contribution Regulation Act (FCRA) enables an association or an NGO to receive foreign funds and they have to mandatorily register under it to receive such funds.
- ❖ HMAS Toowoomba, a frigate of the Royal Australian Navy has paid a visit to the Chennai port on counter-terrorism, anti-piracy and broader maritime security initiatives. For related news please go here: <https://www.tnpscthervupettagam.com/ausindex-19/>
- ❖ The Nilgiris district police has inducted a 60-member strong volunteer service termed "Nilgiri brigade" to assist the police as well as the public during the summer tourist season.



- ❖ An Assam forest officer has discovered *Lecanorchis taiwaniana* - one of the smallest orchids in India in terms of size and duration of bloom to be recorded botanically.
  - This orchid is a mycoheterotroph – a parasitic plant that has abandoned photosynthesis and depends on fungi for food. Myco-heterotrophy is considered a kind of cheating relationship with no benefit for the fungi.
- ❖ The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has signed an agreement with Pakistan to loan \$6 billion over the next three years to meet its foreign debt obligations.
- ❖ Pakistan off-spinner Sana Mir became the most successful women's One Day International spinner in history after she took her 147th wicket playing against South Africa in the third ODI of ICC Women's Championship.
- ❖ The World's No.1 tennis player Novak Djokovic has won the Madrid Open 2019 title. He defeated the Greek tennis player Stefanos Tsitsipas in 2 straight sets - 6-3, 6-4.
- ❖ The Tamilnadu School Education Director has issued a circular to school principals advising them not to mention the caste of the students in Transfer Certificate.
  - The certificate will instead state “refer community certificate issued by Revenue Authorities” in the column seeking details of the caste of the student.
- ❖ The Supreme Court on May 13, 2019 agreed to hear the Centre's plea challenging the verdict of Delhi High Court which quashed the cadre allocation of IAS, IPS officers from the 2017 batch.
  - Because of the New cadre allocation policy, more meritorious candidates in the rank list have been denied allocation to preferred cadres but less meritorious candidates have been allocated to the said cadres.
- ❖ According to a first of its kind study published in medical journal The Lancet, Oncology the number of patients requiring **chemotherapy** annually will rise from 9.8 million in 2018 to 15 million by 2040.
  - The most common indications for chemotherapy worldwide in 2040 will be lung cancer (16.4%), breast cancer (12.7%) and colorectal cancer (11.1%).
- ❖ The executive secretary of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty Organization (CTBTO) has invited India to be an observer in the CTBT.
  - Being an observer would give India access to data from the International Monitoring System (IMS). IMS has 337 sensors across the globe that can detect nuclear test conducted by any nation which violates CTBT.



- ❖ India's G.S. Lakshmi has become the **first woman** to be appointed to ICC's international panel of **match referees** and will be eligible to officiate in international games with immediate effect.
  - She had first officiated as a match referee in domestic women's cricket in 2008-09, has overseen 3 women's ODI matches and 3 women's T20I matches. Last month Australian **Claire Polosak** became the first Woman Umpire to officiate in Men's ODI match.
- ❖ The Central Government has **extended** the ban on the Tamil separatist organisation Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) for another 5 years under sub-sections (1) and (3) of section 3 of the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 1967 with immediate effect.
- ❖ According to an analysis of imagery captured by NASA's Lunar Reconnaissance Orbiter (LRO) the Moon is steadily shrinking, causing wrinkling on its surface and quakes.
  - Tectonic activity occurs in moon as it slowly loses heat from when it was formed 4.5 billion years ago and this has caused the surface of the moon to wrinkle by as much as 50 metres.
- ❖ The 3 minutes documentary film "Seed Mother" about Rahibai Soma Popere will be screened in Cannes Film Festival 2019.
  - She created awareness about the need to propagate native species and variants of grains and vegetables in her native village Khombalne in Maharashtra.
- ❖ Retired American Naval officer Victor Vescovo officer made the world's deepest dive of 6.8 miles (35,853 feet / 10,928 metres) into the deepest place on earth, Challenger Deep in the Mariana Trench, Pacific Ocean.
  - In addition to new species, he discovered plastic pollutants in the floor of the ocean. An estimated 100 million tonnes of plastic have been dumped into the ocean.
- ❖ The Tamil Nadu Generation and Distribution Corporation (Tangedco) has given principal approval for upgrading the 33 KV/11 KV substation in Chennai Anna Salai to become the **first** unmanned substation in Chennai city.
  - Dindigul, Madurai and Tirunelveli are the others towns that already have unmanned substations.
- ❖ The Vice President Venkaiah Naidu inaugurated the Golden Jubilee Celebrations of the Indian Council of Social Science Research (ICSSR). It was established in 1969 and now functions under the Ministry of Human Resource and Development.



- ICSSR provide grants for projects, fellowships, international collaboration, capacity building, survey, publications etc. to promote research in social sciences in India.
- ❖ To promote intercultural dialogue among Asian countries, China is hosting a **Conference on Dialogue of Asian Civilizations** in Beijing from May 15 – 22<sup>nd</sup>.
  - The theme of the event is “exchanges and mutual learning among Asian civilizations and a community with a shared future”. It acknowledges the Asian solutions to benefit its people and Asian wisdom to promote political advancement.
- ❖ India's Captain Aaroohi Pandit became world's first woman to cross Atlantic Ocean solo in a Light Sports Aircraft (LSA) named **Mahi**. She is also the first woman pilot to fly solo above the dangerous Greenland ice-cap.
  - This achievement is part of her ongoing **Women Empower Expedition**. The Slovenia-made, 400 kg, single-engine, ultra-light motor glider, Mahi is the **first** LSA registered under Directorate General of Civil Aviation India.
- ❖ The Indian government is planning to mandate a Quick Response (QR) code-based payment method option using Unified Payments Interface (UPI) at all shops.
- ❖ The 49-year-old veteran Nepali sherpa “Kami Rita Sherpa” has created world record when he scaled Mount Everest for the 23<sup>rd</sup> time.
  - He beat his own record as he had climbed Mt. Everest for the 22<sup>nd</sup> time in 2018.
- ❖ Due to privacy concerns, San Francisco became the first major American city to ban the use of **facial recognition software** by Police forces and other agencies to detect both small-time crimes suspect as well as major criminals.
- ❖ The Wikimedia foundation has stated that China has blocked access to all language versions of the online encyclopaedia Wikipedia in its country.
  - Since 2015 the “Great Firewall” of China had blocked access to Chinese language version of Wikipedia. Chinese users have no access to Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and other popular social media sites since long time.
- ❖ The United Nations Security Council's 1267 Al Qaeda Sanctions Committee has imposed sanctions on ISIS-Khorasan.
  - ISIS-K is a terror group which was formed in 2015 by a Pakistani national and is also known as South Asian branch of ISIS.
- ❖ An integral part of the Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve, the Wayanad Wildlife Sanctuary (WWS) holds the largest tiger population in Kerala. Of the total 176 tigers in the State, 75 were identified from the WWS.





- This biodiversity hotspot is bounded by protected area network of Nagarhole and Bandipur of Karnataka in the northeast and Mudumalai of Tamilnadu on the southeast.
- ❖ Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI) has started a pilot scheme to extend financial assistance of up to ₹10 crore to new-age fintech non-banking finance companies (NBFCs) engaged in financing small businesses and other income-generating activities.
  - Fintech NBFCs are digital loan companies. They leverage information technology to provide fast and convenient access to funding.
- ❖ Chief of Naval Staff, Admiral Sunil Lanba inaugurated Indian Navy's first full-fledged Service Selection Board (SSB) at Diamond Harbour, near Kolkata.
  - Vice Admiral Karambir Singh, the Flag Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Eastern Naval Command, has attended the inauguration.
- ❖ Scientists have found traces of radioactive carbon in marine organisms that inhabit the Mariana Trench, the deepest spot on Earth.
  - This radioactive carbon was released into the atmosphere from 20th-century nuclear bomb tests.
- ❖ National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG), HCL Foundation and Indian National Trust for Art and Culture Heritage (INTACH) have signed a tripartite Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for Plantation of Rudraksha Trees in Uttarakhand under the 'Namami Gange' Programme.
- ❖ The Kerala Legislative Assembly recently announced an initiative to digitize all its records and proceedings under its ambitious project called E-Vidhan which enables state legislature to go fully digital and completely paperless.
  - Once the project is completed, all the Assembly proceedings like submission of notice by a member, question and answers, and all the other correspondence and business concerning the Assembly will go paperless.
- ❖ The Indian Coast Guard ship (ICGS) Vighraha which played an instrumental role in protecting East Coast of India in its 29 years of service from 1990 to 2019 was decommissioned at Visakhapatnam.
  - It was the seventh offshore patrol vessel built by Mazagaon Dock Ltd, Mumbai. It was also leased to Sri Lankan Navy on a dry lease from August 2008 to January 2011.
- ❖ India has reported inconsistencies and bias towards developed countries in the methodology adopted by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) in the STRI ranking of countries.
  - Services Trade Restrictiveness Index (STRI) ranking shows Indian services sector as highly restrictive in areas such as Foreign Direct Investment



(FDI). But one of the most liberalised norms post the LPG (Liberalisation, Privatisation, Globalisation) of 1991 has been Foreign Direct Investment (FDI).

- ❖ The Geological Survey of India (GSI) in its report revealed that about 35 % of India's total Graphite reserves is found in Arunachal Pradesh. This is the highest source found in country.
  - GSI was founded in 1851 mainly to find coal deposits for the Railways. Its headquarters is in Kolkata and it functions under the Ministry of Mines.
- ❖ India for the first time will host the 'Army Scouts Masters competition'. The event will be organised by Indian Army's 'Konark Corps' at Jaisalmer Military Station between end of July to mid-August 2019.
  - The Army Scouts Masters Competition is a part of International Army Games conducted by Russia since 2015 at Koltsovo training ground in Novosibirsk Region. India has been participating since the first game.
- ❖ Under the Rhino Conservation Programme the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC) has undertaken a project to create DNA Profiles of all rhinos present in India.
  - 90% of the rhinos in India are at Kaziranga National Park, Assam. In order to protect them from poaching and to protect their habitat, the government is trying to translocate some of them to Manas National Park and Pobitara Wildlife Sanctuary.
- ❖ The 8th annual report of the Global Drugs Survey (GDS) has surveyed Indians for the first time and found that more than other nationalities, Indians are seeking help to reduce their alcohol intake.
  - GDS runs the largest global survey of recreational drug-use. It is an anonymised, online survey that reports trends in drug use and self-reported harms among regular drug users and early adopters of new trends.
- ❖ India handed over two Mi-24 attack helicopters to Afghanistan and two more will be sent as replacement. These helicopters were gifted by India to Afghanistan in 2015.
  - Under a tripartite agreement, India has agreed to purchase the attack helicopters from Belarus and supply them to Afghanistan.
- ❖ Researchers at the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Bombay have created a "wearable supercapacitor" that can be stitched on to any fabric. It can store and deliver large amount of electrical energy, exceeding other similar devices.
  - This supercapacitor can be used for powering GPS location-based devices or a LED lamp or even charge small electronic devices.



- ❖ Karnataka has declared that it will create a second Chinkara deer (*Gazelle bennettii*) Wildlife Sanctuary in Bukkapatna (Tumakuru district). It had established the first such sanctuary in 2016 at Bagalkot district.
  - 60% of the global population of Indian gazelles or Chinkara is presently found in the Western Rajasthan.
- ❖ Taiwan's Parliament passed a bill legalising same-sex marriage, making it the first place in Asia to do so.
  - The bill would allow same-sex couples to form 'exclusive permanent unions' and would let them apply for a 'marriage registration' with government agencies.
- ❖ Anna University has signed an agreement with the National Security Depository Limited (NSDL) to upload Academic records of students who have studied at university departments and autonomous and non-autonomous affiliated institutions on the National Academic Depository (NAD) web portal.
  - The university has so far uploaded degree certificates awarded since 2012 on the NAD web portal. The NAD was initiated by the Ministry of Human Resource Development in 2017.
- ❖ According to CNRS research centre of France, it takes 25 watts per hour and thus creating 20 grams of carbon dioxide emissions to send a 1 MB email.
  - Greenhouse gas emission from Information and Communication technologies is expected to be 4% in 2020. It makes ICT more carbon emission intensive than aviation industry (2% emission in 2018) and comparable to Automobile industry (8% in 2018).
- ❖ In a first-of-its-kind move, Legal Cadet Corps (LCC), on the lines of the National Cadet Corp, has been put together in Jharkhand.
  - The move is aimed at raising legal awareness among children, especially students of classes 9 to 12, by ensuring that legal education is made a part of regular school curriculum.
- ❖ Child actor, Sunny Pawar (11) won the Best Child Actor Award for his performance in 'Chippa' at the 19<sup>th</sup> New York Indian Film Festival.
- ❖ Major General AK Dhingra has been appointed as the first head of country's first tri-services Special Operations Division comprising commandos from all three services.
- ❖ Indian captain Virat Kohli has bagged the International Cricketer of the Year Award and Smriti Mandhana has won the International Woman Cricketer of Year Award in the CEAT Cricket Rating (CCR) Awards 2019.
- ❖ The Korea Football Association (KFA) had withdrawn their bid to host Asian Cup 2023 which leave the sole other bidders China with a free run to become hosts.



- KFA announced that they had pulled out to strategically focus on a joint bid with North Korea to host Women's World Cup in 2023.
- ❖ The Reserve Bank of India had appointed a committee for 'Suggestions on promoting digital payment'.
  - It was headed by Nandan Nilekani and it has submitted its suggestions on promoting Payment and Settlement Systems in India.
- ❖ The Union government plans to introduce artificial intelligence system in the MCA 21 portal of the Ministry of Corporate Affairs.
  - It seeks to make the compliance process easier as well as ensure routine enforcement activities are done round-the-clock on autopilot basis.
- ❖ Rafael Nadal has won a record 34th ATP Masters 1000 title by defeating Novak Djokovic in the Italian Open final 2019. This is his ninth Rome title.
- ❖ The USA's House of Representatives Speaker Nancy Pelosi was honoured with 2019 John F Kennedy Profile in Courage Award.
- ❖ The United States has recently approved Anti-Ballistic Missile sales to South Korea and Japan. The sale is worth more than \$600 million and comes in backdrop of mounting tensions with North Korea.
  - 92 'Standard Missile-2' (SM-2) which is used by ships against air threats and 160 anti-air AMRAAM (Advanced Medium-Range Air-to-Air Missile) were sold by the US.
- ❖ 102 years old Shyam Saran Negi, a native of Himachal Pradesh who cast the first vote in the Independent India's first general election in 1951 again cast his vote in 2019 Parliamentary elections at Mandi Lok Sabha constituency.
- ❖ Kapil Sharma named as most viewed stand-up comedian in India and abroad by World Book of Records at London. He had started his career as a stand-up comedian from different comedy shows and got fame from "Comedy Nights with Kapil".
- ❖ India has decided to allow the import of refurbished mobile phones only if they are certified by the Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS).
- ❖ Pakistan announced career diplomat Moin ul Haque as its new High Commissioner to India.
- ❖ Sri Lanka marked 10 years since the end of a decades-long civil war that left more than 100,000 people dead. The United Nations has urged Sri Lanka to investigate alleged war crimes committed by both sides.
- ❖ The University Grants Commission (UGC) has directed Universities and higher educational institutions to observe May 21 as Anti-Terrorism day in a measure to wean away youth from terrorism.



- The activities suggested for the day include debates, discussions, symposium, pledge taking ceremony, screening of films. The day marks the death of Former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi.
- ❖ Facebook has reported that it had used Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning (AIML) powered pattern recognition tools to minimise the spread of disinformation during Indian elections.
  - At present, AIML tools assist the platform block or remove over a million accounts per day that are inaccurate, abusive, or violating the platforms' terms of service.
- ❖ The 46-day tournament ICC men's cricket World Cup 2019 will be played across 11 venues in the United Kingdom from 30th of May.
  - The World Cup winner will earn a cash award of 4 million US dollars (about 28 crore rupees) which is the highest prize money on offer in the history of the tournament.
- ❖ Muzaffarnagar district (in Uttar Pradesh) is hosting a first-of-its-kind Gur Mahotsav (Jaggery festival).
  - Muzaffarnagar is arguably the biggest marketplace of jaggery in Asia. Here the farmers produce around 60 varieties of it.
- ❖ According to the "World Economic Situation and Prospects" (WESP), as of mid-2019, India's economy is projected to grow at 7.1 % in the fiscal year 2020 due to strong domestic consumption and investment.
  - WESP report is a joint product of the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA) and the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and the 5 United Nations regional commissions.
- ❖ The Competition Commission of India (CCI) celebrated its Annual Day on 20th May, 2019. CCI has 1 Chairperson and 6 Members appointed by the Central Government.
  - CCI is a statutory body established under the provisions of The Competition Act, 2002. It was established in 2003.
- ❖ India has informed the United Nations Human Rights Council (HRC) that it will no longer entertain any communication with the HRC's Special Rapporteurs on its report.
  - The June 2018 report of the Office of the High Commissioner of Human Rights (OHCHR) enquired about the steps taken by India to address the alleged human rights violations in Jammu and Kashmir.
- ❖ Three-time Formula One (F1) World champion and a motor racing legend Niki Lauda died in Vienna of Austria at the age of 70.





- He suffered burn injuries in the middle of the German Grand Prix in 1976 and is remembered for his fighting spirit and return to racing after being badly burned in the crash.
- ❖ The United Arab Emirates (UAE) launched 'Golden Card' Permanent Residency Scheme in an attempt to woo wealthy individuals and exceptional talents from all over the world.
  - The "Golden Card" programme was unveiled by the UAE Prime Minister Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al-Maktoum.
- ❖ PCT Humanity, a charity run by an Indian Joginder Singh Salaria in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) has set a new Guinness World Record for 'Longest Line of Hunger Relief Package' in Abu Dhabi.
  - The charity was held for hunger relief efforts during the Muslim's holy month of Ramzan.
- ❖ The Department of Biotechnology (DBT) and Department of Atomic Energy (DAE) have signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) for supporting a joint collaborative research programmes in area of Cancer.
  - The DAE was represented by its Tata Memorial Centre, which also functions as coordinating centre on behalf of The National Cancer Grid of India.
- ❖ Jeff Bezos-led Amazon has bagged a seven-year dispute over the ".amazon" domain name from the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN).
- ❖ Food safety regulator FSSAI (Food Safety and Standards Authority of India) has permitted small organic producers having annual turnover of over Rs 12 lakh to sell their produce directly to end-consumers without certification till April, 2020.
- ❖ The annual global index named "Kids Right Index" has ranked countries on the basis of how much they are involved and equipped to improve child rights.
  - India is ranked 117th out of 181 countries.
    - ❖ Flight Lieutenant Bhawana Kanth became the first woman fighter pilot of the Indian Air Force (IAF) to qualify for combat missions. She had joined the fighter squadron in November 2017 and flew her first solo flight on a MiG-21 Bison in March 2018.
  - Along with Mohana Singh and Avani Chaturvedi, she was among the first women selected for the Air Force's fighter stream in 2016.
- ❖ Pakistan has successfully test-fired a land-based ballistic missile named 'Shaheen-II'. Shaheen missile series is named after a Falcon species that live in Pakistan's mountains.



- It is a land-based supersonic intermediate-range surface-to-surface guided ballistic missile capable of hitting targets up to 1,500-2000 kilometers. It is thus capable of reaching major cities in India.
- ❖ The Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) Council of Foreign Ministers meet was held in Kyrgyzstan capital Bishkek. It was attended by External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj.
  - This was the second such meeting attended by India as a full member of SCO. For additional information about SCO please go here: <https://www.tnpscthervupettagam.com/2018-sco-summit-china/>
- ❖ Changsha 5712 Aircraft Industry company under state-owned Aviation Industry Corporation of China (AVIC) has delivered the first overhauled multi-role JF-17 Thunder fighter jet to the Pakistan Air Force (PAF).
  - In 2007 Beijing delivered its first batch of JF-17 to Pakistan. Since the 1990s American-imposed arms embargo, China has been the main supplier of arms to Pakistan.
- ❖ The Vice President of India Venkaiah Naidu Inaugurated 'Tree Ambulance' in Chennai on the occasion of the International Day for Biological Diversity (IDB) celebrations. The Tree Ambulance initiative is a campaign to save trees.
  - According to its founder K Abdul Ghani, it has been conceived, designed, fabricated and equipped to provide first aid treatment to trees, aid tree plantation, assist the shifting of trees, carry out seed ball distribution etc.
- ❖ The South African lawmakers on May 22, 2019 re-elected President Cyril Ramaphosa for another term.
  - Ramaphosa is the leader of the African National Congress (ANC).
- ❖ In the recently launched RISAT-2B satellite, the highly complex Radial Rib Antenna has been successfully unfurled and has been deployed in-orbit.
  - This 3.6 metre antenna was kept folded & stowed during launch and then later successfully unfurled & deployed in-orbit. It was indigenously built by ISRO in a record time of 13 months which usually takes 3 – 4 years.
- ❖ The Election Commission of India (ECI) submitted a copy of the notification issued by them under the terms of Section 73 of the Representation of People's Act, 1951 to the President.
  - Section 73 deals with the publication of results of General Elections to the House of the People and of names of persons nominated by the President. The House or Assembly shall be deemed to be duly constituted after the notification.



- ❖ Exercising powers vested in him under Article 75 (1) of the Constitution of India, the President Ram Nath Kovind appointed Narendra Modi to the office of Prime Minister of India.
  - The President requested Prime Minister Narendra Modi to advise him about the names of others to be appointed as members of the Union Council of Ministers.
- ❖ The Assam Rifles will soon have a presence in Jammu and Kashmir as the government has approved conversion and placement of one of its battalion into the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF).
  - The Assam Rifles draws its strength of officers from the Army and functions under the command of the Union Home Ministry.
- ❖ Electronic and electric auto components manufacturer Flash Electronics India have filed a patent infringement lawsuit against two-wheeler maker Royal Enfield in the United States.
  - It alleges infringement in the production of a key component called “regulator-rectifier”. It converts the AC voltage produced in motorcycle engines into DC voltage driving the motorcycle's entire electrical systems.
- ❖ The Working Group on "Foreign Portfolio Investors (FPI) Regulations" under the Chairmanship of H.R. Khan has submitted its report to Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI).
  - SEBI had constituted this working group in March 2018 under H.R. Khan who is a retired Deputy Governor of Reserve Bank of India (RBI).
- ❖ The ‘UNSDG (Sustainable Development Goals) 10 Most Influential People in Healthcare Award’ was received by Acharya Balkrishna, Managing Director of Patanjali Ayurveda Limited on behalf of India’s Patanjali Group of Institutions in Geneva, Switzerland.
- ❖ Lt. Governor of Delhi Anil Baijal inaugurated the “Sahara Naval Hostel” for the Veer Naris in New Delhi. It is a unique Hostel project for Naval Widows or Veer Naris.
  - It aims to provide rehabilitation of Naval Widows and their families in period immediately after unfortunate demise of their husbands serving the Indian Navy.
- ❖ Securing the right of Sikhs, the UK government has passed an amendment which allows the people of the community to carry “kirpans” and use it during religious and cultural functions.
  - Kirpan is omitted from the list of offensive weapons in the ‘Offensive Weapons Bill’ that aims at tackling rising knife crimes in the UK.



- ❖ For the first time in India's electoral history, in 2019 Parliamentary elections the voter turnout for men and women was almost equal.
  - 66.79% Men voted and 66.68% women voted in these elections.
- ❖ For the first time, Anna University has launched a two-year Post-Doctoral Fellowship programme with a stipend of Rs 45,000 a month and Rs 10,000 for accommodation. An additional travel grant of Rs 1 lakh per year is also given.
  - Researchers with a PhD in any science or engineering subject can apply for the fellowship.
- ❖ An historical building 'Guru Nanak palace' located in Narowal of Pakistan's Punjab province was partially demolished by locals who sold its precious windows, doors and ventilators.
  - The walls of the 16-room palace had pictures of Sikh founder Guru Nanak Singh.
- ❖ According to an analysis by Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR) and New Election Watch, among the 539 newly elected Lok Sabha MPs, 43% have declared criminal cases against themselves.
- ❖ Sumalatha Ambareesh is the lone Independent MP of the 17<sup>th</sup> Lok Sabha and is elected from Mandya in Karnataka.
- ❖ The World Health Organization (WHO) for the first time has classified "burnout" as a medical condition during its recently concluded 72<sup>nd</sup> World Health Assembly in Geneva and added it to its on its International Classification of Diseases (ICD) list.
  - WHO classifies burnout as "a syndrome conceptualized as resulting from chronic workplace stress that has not been successfully managed".
- ❖ India has invited the leaders of the BIMSTEC Member States for the swearing-in ceremony of Prime Minister Narendra Modi.
  - This is in line with the Government's focus on its 'Neighbourhood First' policy.
- ❖ Pema Khandu sworn-in as the Chief Minister of Arunachal Pradesh on May 29 for a second term.
- ❖ China won the badminton world mixed-team championship, Sudirman Cup 2019 in Nanning, China.
  - They beat Japan in men's doubles, women's singles and men's singles to clinch the title for an 11<sup>th</sup> time. Japan have never won the Sudirman Cup.
- ❖ Scientists at the University of Chicago in the US have made a new record by creating a superconductor called "lanthanum superhydrides" which can conduct at minus 23 degrees Celsius.



- The earlier record for a superconductor was held at minus 73 Celsius.
- ❖ Oscar Academy President John Bailey e-launched the Hindi version of 'Digital Dilemma' by National Film Archive of India (NFAI).
  - Translated in many languages, the 'Digital Dilemma' written by Milt Shelton and Andy Maltz deals about the way movie business currently stores and access important digital data.
- ❖ According to research unveiled at a conference of Environmental Toxicologists in Helsinki at Finland, Rivers worldwide are polluted with antibiotics that exceed environmental safety thresholds by up to 300 times. Ex: high levels of skin and urinary infection-antibiotic ciprofloxacin in Thames river, London.
  - The countries with the highest levels of antibiotic river pollution were Bangladesh, Kenya, Ghana, Pakistan and Nigeria.
- ❖ The South Korean film director Bong Joon-ho was awarded the "Palme d' Or" for his film "Parasite" at the 72nd Cannes Film Festival, on May 25. It is the most prestigious prize awarded at Cannes.
  - Founded in 1946, Cannes Film Festival is an annual film festival held in Cannes, France. It is one of the "Big Three" alongside the Venice Film Festival and Berlin International Film Festival.
- ❖ Orchha town in Madhya Pradesh's Bundelkhand region has been included in tentative list of United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization's (UNESCO's) World Heritage Sites.
  - There are 37 Indian heritage sites already in the UNESCO World Heritage list. Buddhist monuments at Sanchi, rock shelters of Bhimbetka and Khajuraho group of monuments are other internationally popular sites in Madhya Pradesh.
- ❖ Sachin Tendulkar, Virat Kohli, Sunil Gavaskar, Pakistan's Chacha Abdul Jalil, Bangladesh's Shoaib Ali, Sri Lanka's Gayan Senanayake will be awarded the first Global Sports Fan award on the sidelines of ICC Cricket World Cup 2019.
  - The ICC Cricket world cup officially begins on May 30, 2019.
- ❖ Mahesh Mangaonkar triumphed for the second time in the Sekisui Open in Kriens, Switzerland. Three years earlier he had won it the first time.
  - Sekisui Open is a Challenger tour event of the Professional Squash Association (PSA), the world body which governs the sport. Mahesh beat Bernat Jaume of Spain.
- ❖ Malawi youth and rights activist Charles Kajoloweka has confirmed his appointment as United Nations (UN) Youth Ambassador for Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) number 16.



- SDG 16 advoctaes for Peace, justice and strong institutions.

## **TAMIL NADU**

### **Tiruppur Tops**

- ❖ Tiruppur district has achieved the highest pass percentage in both XII and X board results released recently.
- ❖ Top 3 districts in pass percentages are
- ❖ XII Results
  - Tiruppur - 95.37 %
  - Erode - 95.23 %
  - Perambalur - 95.15 %
- ❖ X Results
  - Tiruppur- 98.53 %
  - Ramanathapuram - 98.48 %
  - Namakkal - 98.45 %

### **Rent Courts**

- ❖ The government has notified the Rent Courts for all 32 districts in the State.
- ❖ Chennai district has been allotted 7 rent courts.
- ❖ This is in accordance with Section 32 of the Tamil Nadu Regulation of Rights and Responsibilities of Landlords and Tenants Act, 2017.
- ❖ As per the Act, it is mandatory to enter into written tenancy agreements.
- ❖ The agreement should be registered with the designated jurisdictional Rent Authority.
- ❖ Rent Courts “alone” will have the power to hear and decide applications relating to disputes between landlords and tenants.
- ❖ There will be no jurisdiction of civil courts in settling such disputes.

*Dispute redressal mechanism.*





### **Anti-Cancer Mushroom**

- ❖ A patent has been issued for extracting anti-cancer compounds from a wild mushroom variety found in Western Ghats of Tamil Nadu.
- ❖ It was invented by Madras University professor Venkatesan Kaviyaran and his PhD student J Manjunathan.
- ❖ Lentinus tuberregium is the mushroom variety identified by them.
- ❖ 2 bio-active compounds (LT1 and LT 2) in this mushroom exhibit anti-cancer properties.
- ❖ In the 1970s the Japanese mushroom “Lentinus edodes” was proved to exhibit anticancer activity.
- ❖ It was later approved for use by the Food and Drug Administrator (FDA) of USA.

### **Common Mushrooms of Tamilnadu**

- ❖ ‘Arisi Kalaan’ (Termitomyces microcarpus) and ‘Putru Kalaan’ (Termitomyces heimi) varieties are sold in the local vegetable markets of Tirunelveli and Thiruvananthapuram.
- ❖ The Kaani tribe in Kanyakumari forests are known to use mushrooms in their daily diet.

### **Grizzled Giant Squirrel**

- ❖ For the first time more than 300 nests of Grizzled Giant Squirrel were sighted by researchers.
- ❖ Its scientific name is Ratufa macroura.
- ❖ They were spotted at Pakkamalai Reserve Forests near Gingee (in Eastern Ghats) in Tamilnadu.
- ❖ Tamilnadu government had earlier established The Grizzled Squirrel Wildlife Sanctuary in 1988.
- ❖ It lies mostly in Virudhunagar district (especially in Srivilliputhur) and partly in Madurai district.
- ❖ It is also known as Srivilliputhur Wildlife Sanctuary.



Fact Box: Grizzled Giant Squirrel

Threats: habitat loss, poaching, pet trade

IUCN Red List: Near Threatened

Listed under:

Schedule II of CITES

( Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora)

Schedule I of the Wildlife Protection Act (WPA), 1972.

### Anti Defection Law

- ❖ The Supreme Court has stayed proceedings initiated by Tamil Nadu Assembly Speaker for disqualification of three AIADMK MLAs for “anti-party activities”.
- ❖ The anti-defection law (ADL) was passed by parliament in 1985.
- ❖ The 52nd amendment to the Constitution added the Tenth Schedule (ADL).
- ❖ ADL laid down the process by which legislators may be disqualified on grounds of defection.

## Anti Defection Law

### Who stands defected?

- ▶ MLA or MP voluntarily resigned from his party or disobeyed the directives of the party leadership on a vote.
- ▶ A member who votes, or does not vote in the legislature, contrary to the directions of his political party. - However, if the member has taken prior permission, or is condoned by the party within 15 days from such voting or abstention, the member shall not be disqualified.
- ▶ Independent members would be disqualified if they joined a political party.
- ▶ Nominated members who were not members of a party could choose to join a party within six months; after that period, they were treated as a party member or independent member.

## Exceptions

- \* A party could be merged into another if at least two-thirds of its party legislators voted for the merger .
- \* Any person elected as speaker or chairman could resign from his party, and rejoin the party if he demitted that post.



## Thoppil Mohammed Meeran

- ❖ Nagercoil based Tamil author Thoppil Mohammed Meeran has passed away.
- ❖ He was awarded Sahithya Academy award for his 1997 novel Saivu Narkali.
- ❖ Some of his acclaimed works include

NOVELS	SHORT STORY COLLECTIONS	TRANSLATIONS
Oru Kadalora Kiramathin Kathai (1988)	Anbuku Muthumai Illai	Deivathin Kanne
Turaimugam	Thankaraasu	Husainul Jamal
Koonan Thoppu	Anandhasayanam Colony	Vaikom Mohammed Bashir Vazkhai Varalaru
Saivu Narkali	Thoppil Mohammed Meeran Kadhaigal	Thirukottiyur Kurunaaval
Anju Vannath Theru	Oru Mamaramum Konjam Paravaigalum	Meesan Karkalin Kaaval
	Oru Kutty Theevin Varaipadam	

## Sahithya Academy

- ❖ The Sahithya Academy was established in 1954.
- ❖ Sahithya Academy award is conferred annually on writers of the most outstanding books of literary merit.
- ❖ The book can be published in any of the major 24 Indian languages.

## IGST Dues

- ❖ The Tamilnadu government has requested the Union Finance Ministry for speedy disbursal of its share of the Integrated Goods and Service Tax (IGST).
- ❖ It has to receive the pending ₹5,453.82 crore for the financial year 2017 – 18.
- ❖ IGST is charged on movement of goods and services from one state to another.
- ❖ Under Article 269A, such tax will be collected by Centre.
- ❖ The Centre will retain 50% of IGST while remaining 50% will be devolved to States and Union Territories.



## AI Drones

- ❖ IIT – Madras has designed and developed a 3D printed hexacopter-drone for **rescue operations** during disasters.
- ❖ It can fly and automatically detect human beings using **face recognition** technology.
- ❖ It can recognize individuals in need of immediate medical care in a disaster affected site using **activity recognition** technology.
- ❖ It can also send the location details of people to the ground station in real time for faster rescue operations.

## Then Pennai River

- ❖ Efforts to surface transport the 300-tonne semi-carved stone to Karnataka has altered the course of Thenpennai river in Perandapalli village, Krishnagiri.
- ❖ The South Pennar River is known as Thenpennaiyar in Tamil and Dakshina Pinakini in Kannada. It is also referred as Ponnaiyar.
- ❖ The river originates from the South-Eastern side of the Chennakesava hills and the North-Western side of the Nandi Hills in the Chikkaballapur district of Karnataka state.
- ❖ It flows for a distance of about 85 kilometres within Karnataka, to the north of Bangalore.
- ❖ It flows a total of 400 kilometres (km) from its point of origin before joining the Bay of Bengal at Cuddalore district of Tamilnadu.





### **Fruit Show**

- ❖ The 61st annual Fruit Show will take place at the Sims Park in Coonoor on May 25 and 26.
- ❖ The Sim's park was established in 1874
- ❖ It showcases exhibits made of fruits locally produced in the villages surrounding the Nilgiris and at the Pomological Station in Coonoor.

### **100 crores upgrade**

- ❖ Ten high-performing state universities across India are set to undergo Rs 100 crore upgrade this academic year.
- ❖ The varsities have been selected under the Centre's Rashtriya Uchchatar Shiksha Abhiyaan (RUSA) to promote excellence.
- ❖ They will also be mentored in various disciplines by 7 US universities, including the prestigious Cornell, UPenn and UC Berkeley.
- ❖ The varsities will establish special Campus Companies under the Companies act to receive funds directly from the Union Government.
- ❖ The underlying condition will be that the 100 crores should be spent by March 2020.
- ❖ Karaikudi Alagappa University, Hyderabad's Osmania University, Savitribai Phule University have already formed their companies.

### **LTTE Tribunal**

- ❖ The Government of India has constituted the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Tribunal under sitting Judge of Delhi High Court Justice Sangita Dhingra Sehgal.
- ❖ It will adjudicate whether or not there is sufficient cause for declaring the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) as an unlawful association.
- ❖ Recently the Home Ministry had issued a notification extending ban on LTTE in India for a further period of five years.
- ❖ LTTE is declared as an unlawful association in India since 1991 under the provisions of Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 1967.

### **Cauvery Water**

- ❖ The Cauvery Water Management Authority has ordered Karnataka to release 9.19 tmcft of water to Tamil Nadu from the river Cauvery as part of the June quota.





- ❖ Water will be released from the inter-state contact point presently identified as Billigundulu gauge and discharge station.
- ❖ S. Masood Hussain was named as head of the CWMA (Cauvery Water Management Authority).
- ❖ The composition of CWMA is as follows

### **CWMA**

**Chairman** - To be appointed by the Central Government, who shall have tenure of five years or till sixty-five years of age, whichever is earlier, amongst the serving officers, namely: -

(i) who is a senior and eminent engineer with wide experience in water resource management; handling of inter-State water sharing issues; construction, operation and maintenance of irrigation projects; or

(ii) an All India Service Officer, in the rank of Secretary or Additional Secretary to the Government of India with experience in water resources and inter-State water sharing issues;

**Two whole-time Members** - To be appointed by the Central Government for a term of three years which may be extendable upto five years, as mentioned below:

(i) One Member (Water Resources) – an engineer not below the rank of Chief Engineer from the Central Water Engineering Services (CWES) cadre;

(ii) One Member (Agriculture) – not below the rank of a Commissioner from the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare;

**Two Part-Time Members** – Representatives of the Central Government of the rank of Joint Secretary to be nominated by the Ministry of Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation and Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare respectively;

**Four Part-Time Members from party States** – Administrative Secretaries in charge of Water Resource Departments of each State Government of Kerala, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and Union territory of Puducherry who shall be nominated by the State Governments and Union territory administration respectively.

- ❖ Navin Kumar was appointed chairman of the CWRC (Cauvery Water Regulation Committee).
- ❖ The composition of CWRC is as follows

### **II. Cauvery Water Regulation Committee**

**17. Composition of the Cauvery Water Regulation Committee.**—(1) There shall be a Cauvery Water Regulation Committee consisting of the following members, namely:-

- |   |   |                   |
|---|---|-------------------|
| 1) Whole-Time Member (Water Resources) of the Authority   | - | Chairman;         |
| 2) One representative each of the States of Kerala, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and Union territory of Puducherry not below the rank of Chief Engineer. | - | Member;           |
| 3) One representative of India Meteorological Department, of the rank of Joint Secretary  | - | Member;           |
| 4) One representative of Central Water Commission dealing with river gauging not below the rank of Chief Engineer                                 | - | Member;           |
| 5) One representative of the Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers' Welfare, Government of India not below the rank of Commissioner                   | - | Member;           |
| 6) Secretary to the Authority   | - | Member Secretary. |



## Chennai Water crisis

- ❖ The government plans to set up five mini-desalination plants of one million litre capacity each at Chennai.
- ❖ Costing 120 crore each, these plants will be set at Kasimedu, Thiruvottiyur, Triplicane, MRC Nagar and Thiruvanimiyur.

<b>HIGH-FIVE ON SHORELINE</b>	
Representational Image	
<b>Location</b>   Kasimedu, Thiruvottiyur, Triplicane, MRC Nagar, Thiruvanimiyur	
<b>Population to be served</b>   1 lakh people per plant	
<b>Estimated Cost</b>   ₹120 crore	
<b>Where</b>   1 km from shoreline	
<b>Size</b>   To come up on an area of approximately 1 sq.km	
<b>Cost</b>   ₹55 to ₹75 per kilo litre	
<b>Deadline</b>   Within 6 months	

## NATIONAL

### Important Geological Sites

- ❖ Geological Survey of India has taken steps to raise awareness about 2 important geological sites in Meghalaya.
- ❖ They are Mawmluh cave and Therriaghat, Sobhar in East Khasi Hill District.
- ❖ These sites present evidence of the geological evolution of the Indian land mass.

#### Mawmluh Cave

- ❖ This site is evidence of a major climatic event about 4200 years ago.
- ❖ The stalagmite in the Mawmluh cave has been tagged a Global Stratotype Section and Point (GSSP).
- ❖ This is the first formally ratified marker of a geological time period in India.

#### Therriaghat

- ❖ This site marks the Cretaceous (K)-Palaeogene (Pg) mass extinction event.
- ❖ Therriaghat has the most complete records of the Cretaceous-Palaeogene (K-Pg) boundary transition in India.



## **Global Terrorist**

- ❖ The United Nations Security Council has designated Pakistan's Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM) chief Masood Azhar as a Global Terrorist.
- ❖ The decision was taken by the 1267 Al-Qaida Sanctions Committee of UNSC.
- ❖ Azhar and his organisation will face assets freeze, travel ban and arms embargo.
- ❖ China has blocked the earlier 4 attempts to blacklist Masood Azhar.
- ❖ The Sanctions List currently contains the names of 262 individuals and 83 entities.
- ❖ The 1267 Al-Qaida Sanctions Committee aims to impose strictures against individuals and entities associated with Al-Qaida and the Islamic State.

## **Recent attacks**

- ❖ Masood Azhar's organisation conducted the Pulwama terror attack of February 14, 2019 in India.
- ❖ Other disastrous attacks masterminded by Azhar include
  - 2008 Mumbai terror attacks
  - 2016 Pathankot air base strike and much more.

## **Start-up India Vision 2024**

- ❖ The Commerce and Industry Ministry has proposed measures such as tax incentives to promote entrepreneurs as part of the 'Start-up India Vision 2024'.
- ❖ The aim of the vision document is to facilitate setting up of 50,000 new start-ups in the country by 2024 and creating 20 lakh direct and indirect employment opportunities.
- ❖ The vision document has been prepared by the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) which is under the Commerce and Industry Ministry.

## **Start-up India**

- ❖ Start-up India, launched in January 2016, is the flagship initiative of the Indian government.
- ❖ It aims to build a strong ecosystem for the growth of start-up businesses and to drive sustainable economic growth by generating employment opportunities.
- ❖ The Start-up India action plan provides tax and other incentives.

## **VAHAN Database**

- ❖ Vahan is a digital national vehicle registry portal.



- ❖ It captures 28 types of vehicle data including colour, power, dealer, chassis number and fuel type.
- ❖ The Road Transport and Highways Ministry has introduced new norms to prevent misuse of this data.
- ❖ It has mandated that the data can only be used by companies
  - that are registered in India and
  - only if they at least 50 per cent Indian owned.
- ❖ All such data accessed by companies will have to be stored in servers in India.
- ❖ Companies using such data for commercial purpose will have to pay out an annual fee of ₹3 crore.

### **One Lakh Meals**

- ❖ The Central Food Technological Research Institute (CFTRI) is preparing more than one lakh ready-to-eat meals.
- ❖ These will be distributed in Fani cyclone affected Odisha, Andhra Pradesh and West Bengal.
- ❖ CFTRI is one of the constituent laboratories under the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR).
- ❖ It was opened on 21 October 1950 in Mysore, Karnataka.

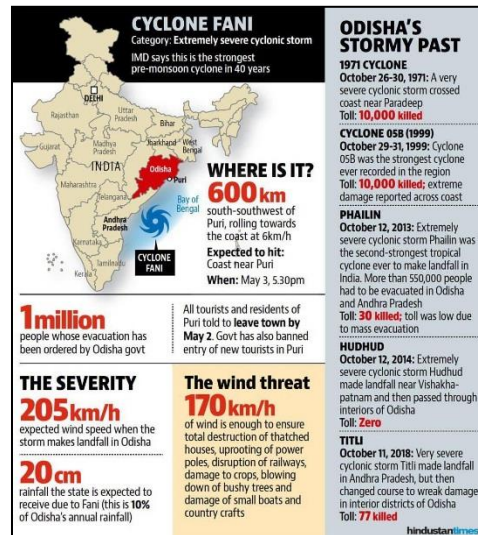
### **Forgotten Weaves**

- ❖ Delhi-based writer Radhika Singh has written a book titled "Suraiya Hasan Bose: Weaving a Legacy"
- ❖ It is about Suraiya Hasan Bose who is credited with reviving 2 forgotten weaves
  - Himroo - a Persian brocade weave
  - Mashru - a silk and cotton weave

### **Cyclone Fani**

- ❖ One of the "rarest of rare", cause to abundant rainfall and windstorm that gusted up to 240 kmph on May 3 in Odisha coastal region.
- ❖ It causes to huge infrastructural damage before weakening then entering into West Bengal.
- ❖ The India Meteorological Department (IMD) has classified Fani as an "extremely severe cyclonic storm".

- ❖ The name 'Fani' for this cyclone was suggested by Bangladesh. Fani means snake.
- ❖ UN agency for disaster reduction has commended the Indian Meteorological Department's "almost pinpoint accuracy" of early warnings that helped Civil authorities conduct a well-targeted evacuation plan and minimise the loss of life.



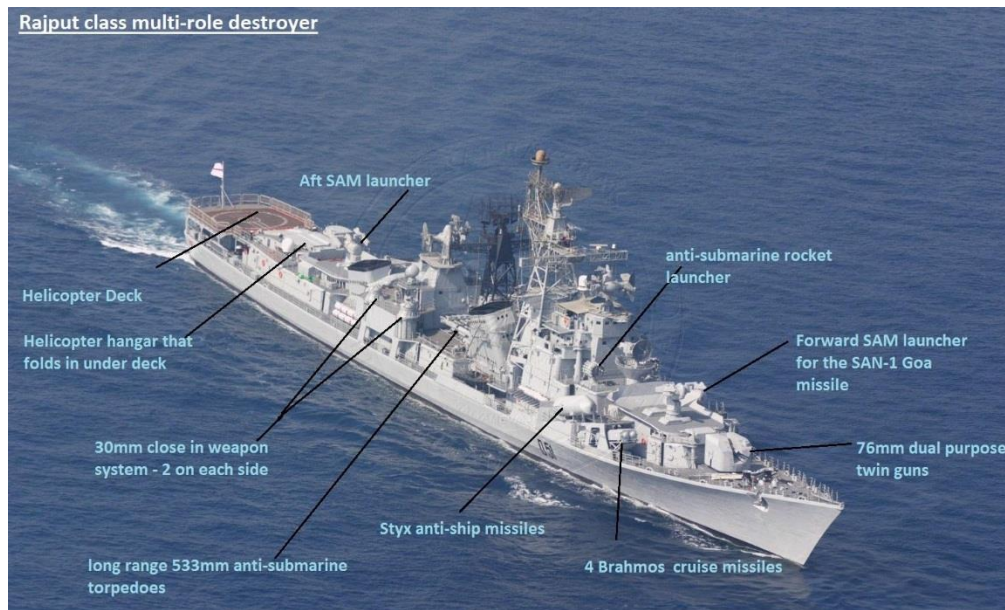
## INS Ranjit

- ❖ Indian Navy's frontline missile destroyer - INS Ranjit has been decommissioned at the naval dockyard in Visakhapatnam after having served for 36 years.
- ❖ It was the third of the five Kashin-class destroyers built by erstwhile USSR, and was commissioned in 1983.
- ❖ As of 2019, only one Kashin-class destroyers ship remains in service with Russian Navy, and five with Indian Navy as Rajput-class destroyers.
- ❖ It is first of five Rajput class destroyers to go out of service.
- ❖ She was launched formally on 16 June 1979 and was given its Russian name "Lovkly" meaning "Agile".
- ❖ It has been deployed in a number of operations including IPKF (Indian Peace Keeping Force) operations and Operation Talwar (1999) during Kargil conflict.

## Rajput-class destroyers

- ❖ The Rajput-class destroyers (also known as Kashin-II class or Project 61E) are modified versions of Soviet Kashin class destroyers.
- ❖ It includes INS Rajput, INS Rana, INS Ranjit, INS Ranvir and INS Ranvijay.

- ❖ The Rajput class destroyers were first to be fitted with Brahmos supersonic cruise missiles.



## Extinction of Modi

- ❖ The Modi script is now on the verge of extinction.
- ❖ This is one of the 2 scripts used to write the Marathi language.
- ❖ It is a sort of “cursive” style of writing Marathi.
- ❖ It was developed in 1400s.
- ❖ This is also called as shorthand form of writing Marathi.
- ❖ Devanagiri is the standard script to write Marathi.
- ❖ The word Modi derived from Marathi means “broken”.
- ❖ For Tamilnadu related news on Modi script kindly go here <https://www.tnpscthervupettagam.com/modi-script/> (News Dated 21.04.19)

## 10 Helicopters

- ❖ The Defence Acquisition Council (DAC) approved the procurement of 10 Kamov Ka-31 Russian helicopters for Indian Navy.
- ❖ DAC is headed by Defence Minister Nirmala Sitharaman.
- ❖ These choppers are Airborne Early Warning and Control helicopters
- ❖ So, they would be deployed on the aircraft carriers and warships of the Navy.





- ❖ They will be used to dominate and protect the air space when aircraft carriers are carrying out
  - defence operations in open sea
  - anti-submarine warfare operations.

### **Darbar Move – Kashmir**

- ❖ The Civil Secretariat and other government offices of Jammu and Kashmir government will be re-opened in Srinagar.
- ❖ Srinagar is the Summer capital of Jammu and Kashmir from May to October.
- ❖ Jammu is the winter capital of J & K from November to April.
- ❖ The biannual shift of the secretariat and all other government offices from Srinagar to Jammu every year is termed as Darbar move.
- ❖ It was started by Dogra King Maharaja Ranbir Singh in 1872.

### **Honey Mission**

- ❖ The Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC) has distributed more than one lakh bee-boxes among farmers and unemployed youths across India.
- ❖ This is done under “Honey Mission” initiative.
- ❖ The mission was launched in 2017 by Prime Minister Modi.
- ❖ He termed it as the beginning of a ‘Sweet revolution’ in India.

### **KVIC**

- ❖ KVIC is a statutory body formed under ‘Khadi and Village Industries Commission Act of 1956’.
- ❖ It is the nodal agency for the implementation of Prime Minister Employment Generation Programme (PMEGP) at national level.

### **INS Vela**

- ❖ The Indian Navy has launched 4th Stealth Scorpene-Class submarine ‘INS Vela’.
- ❖ It was built at Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Limited (MDL) in Mumbai.
- ❖ Ms Naval Group (earlier known as DCNS) is the French collaborator.
- ❖ It is named ‘Vela’ after the Soviet era submarine ‘INS Vela’ which joined Indian naval service in 1973.
- ❖ INS Vela is built under Project 75.





- ❖ The Scorpene class is the Navy's first modern conventional diesel-electric submarine series in almost two decades.

### **Ayodhya Dispute**

- ❖ The Supreme Court (SC) constituted three-member mediation committee for Ayodhya dispute has submitted its interim report in a sealed cover on May 6.
- ❖ If the committee report were failure in its attempt, a Constitution bench headed by CJI Ranjan Gogoi will take up the case for further hearing.
- ❖ The SC will hear appeals against the September 30, 2010 verdict of the Allahabad High Court which ordered a three-way division of the disputed 2.77 acres site between
  - Nirmohi Akhara sect
  - Sunni Central Wakf Board, Uttar Pradesh
  - Deity Ramlalla Virajman.

### **End of Black Listing**

- ❖ The Ministry of Home Affairs has discontinued its 'local adverse lists' of Indian-origin people.
- ❖ It is widely known as 'Black Lists' of Indian-origin people.
- ❖ The list is maintained by Indian Embassies in the foreign countries.
- ❖ It has names of people who have taken asylum in a foreign country under plea of alleged persecution in India.
- ❖ Such people in the list are denied visa services by Indian embassies in the foreign country.
- ❖ Post this change, they are also allowed to get Overseas Citizenship of India (OCI) cards after 2 years of using a normal Indian visa.

### **Shortage in Healthcare**

- ❖ According to a World Health Organisation (WHO) database, India is facing critical shortage of healthcare providers.
- ❖ Despite employing 5 million workers shortage is due to inequitable distributions of skilled health workers.
- ❖ Bihar, Jharkhand, Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan face severe shortage of healthcare workers.

- ❖ Delhi, Kerala, Punjab and Gujarat have a better number.
- ❖ WHO recommends that India needs to design courses for different categories of non-physician care providers.

### India's first ice cafe

- ❖ Border Road Organisation (BRO) officials have created India's first ever ice cafe in the mountain village of Gaya in Ladakh region of Jammu and Kashmir.
- ❖ This is located at 14,000 feet height above sea level, on the famous ManaliLeh Highway.
- ❖ The ice sculpture, resembles a Buddhist meditation place, was created by natural process.



### Vacation Bench

- ❖ The Supreme Court will remain closed for the annual summer break from May 13 to June 30, 2019.
- ❖ The Chief Justice of India has constituted special **Vacation benches** under Rule 6 of Order II of the Supreme Court Rules, 2013.
- ❖ The court hears a plea even during vacation if it decides it is an “urgent matter”.
- ❖ It generally admits writs related to habeas corpus, certiorari, prohibition and quo warranto matters for enforcement of any fundamental right.
- ❖ For the first time, the Chief Justice of India himself will be heading the Vacation Bench from May 25 to May 30.



## Rural Startups

- ❖ The National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) has announced a Rs 700-crore venture capital fund for
  - equity investments in agriculture
  - rural-focused startups
- ❖ The fund has been launched by Nab Ventures, a subsidiary of NABARD.
- ❖ The startups engaged in agriculture, food and rural development space will get priority.

### About NABARD:

- ❖ NABARD is the **apex financing agency** for institutions that provide investment and production credit for promoting the developmental activities in rural areas
- ❖ It was established on the recommendations of B.Sivaraman Committee in 1982.
- ❖ It looks after the development of the cottage industry, small scale industry and village industry.
- ❖ NABARD supervises
  - State Cooperative Banks (StCBs),
  - District Cooperative Central Banks (DCCBs)
  - Regional Rural Banks (RRBs)

## Abhyas Target Drone

- ❖ Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) conducted successful flight test of ABHYAS - High-speed Expendable Aerial Target (HEAT) drone.
- ❖ The test was conducted at Interim Test Range, Chandipur in Odisha.
- ❖ Abhyas uses indigenously developed MEMS based navigation system for its navigation and guidance.
- ❖ It is a **target drone**.
- ❖ Target drones serve an important role in the development of a range of **interceptors** and ballistic **missile defense** systems.
- ❖ Abhyas is designed to simulate aircraft for **endoatmospheric** surface-to-air interception tests as well as air-to-air exercises.
- ❖ An endoatmospheric missile is one that remains within the earth's atmosphere (at an altitude below 100 kilometers).



### **Film Institute**

- ❖ The All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) has granted approval to 5 courses of Film and Television Institute of India (FTII), Pune.
- ❖ The courses are recognised under the newly created “APPLIED ARTS AND CRAFTS” category by AICTE.
- ❖ Four courses are in Television wing (Direction, Electronic Cinematography, Video Editing and Sound Recording & TV Engineering).
- ❖ One course is in Film wing (Feature Film Screenplay Writing).
- ❖ FTII thus becomes the only film institute which has the unique distinction of being recognised by AICTE.
- ❖ FTII, Pune was established in 1960.
- ❖ It is an autonomous institute under the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting of the Government of India.

### **Project Sparrow**

- ❖ Government of India has now launched a new initiative called Project Sparrow.
- ❖ SPARROW stands for Smart Performance Appraisal Report Recording Online Window.
- ❖ It aims for
  - Online writing of Annual Performance Appraisal Reports (APARs) for over 46,000 Group B & C officers of Central Board of Indirect Tax and Customs
  - Enhancing the overall efficiency and morale of the huge workforce working in Central GST and Customs formations of CBIC.
- ❖ Online writing of APARs in SPARROW for IRS (C&CE) Officers has already been implemented in 2016-17.

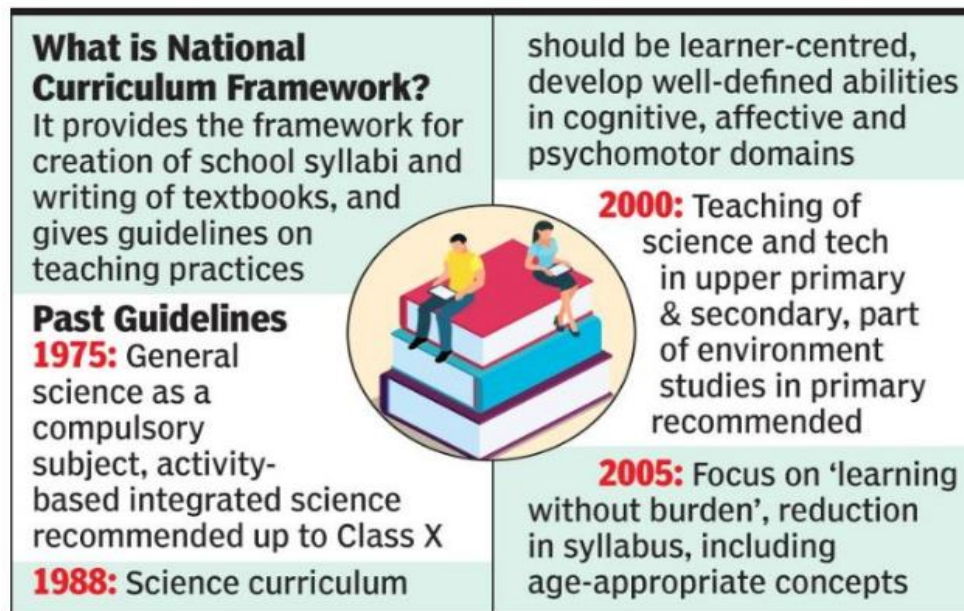


## Child Mortality Rate

- ❖ Researchers at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health have published a new study in the Lancet Global Health on the deaths among children under five in India.
- ❖ In 2015 the total number of children under five who died was 1.2 million (47.8 per 1,000)
- ❖ It is the highest in the world.
- ❖ Highest mortality rate was in Assam at 73.1 per 1,000 children. It was 9.7 in Goa.
- ❖ Major causes of death were preterm complications and preventable infectious diseases.
- ❖ Steps like vaccine coverage, improving childbirth and neonatal care can prevent such deaths.

## NCERT Syllabus review

- ❖ The director of NCERT (National Council of Educational Research and Training) has announced plans to review the National Curriculum Framework (NCF) 2005.
- ❖ The NCF provides the framework for creation of the school syllabi and the writing of textbooks.
- ❖ It also gives guidelines on teaching practices in India.
- ❖ Four NCF have been released in 1975, 1988, 2000 and 2005.
- ❖ The task committee to review syllabus will be created shortly.





## Pharma Pricing Control

- ❖ The National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority (NPPA) has slashed the prices of 9 non-scheduled cancer drugs by up to 87 %.
- ❖ Earlier this year government had capped the price of 42 cancer drugs at 30 %.
- ❖ NPPA was established in 1997.
- ❖ It functions under Department of Pharmaceuticals, Ministry of Chemicals & Fertilizers.
- ❖ NPPA publishes lists of medicines and their maximum ceiling prices under the Drug Price Control Orders (DPCO).

## MRSAM Missile

- ❖ Indian Navy along with DRDO and Israel Aerospace Industries has carried out successful test-firing of the MRSAM missile.



- ❖ These Medium Range Surface to Air Missile (MRSAM) the missiles will significantly enhance the
  - anti-air warfare capability Indian Navy
  - overall combat effectiveness
- ❖ These Surface to Air Missiles are fitted onboard the Kolkata Class Destroyers and would also be fitted on all future major warships of the Indian Navy.





### **Drought Advisory**

- ❖ The Union government has issued a drought advisory to 6 States - Maharashtra, Gujarat, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana and Tamil Nadu.
- ❖ The drought advisory is issued to states when the water level in reservoirs is 20 per cent less than the average of live water storage figures of the past 10 years.
- ❖ This advisory recommends states to use water for drinking purpose only till the dams are replenished.

### **Exercise Bull Strike**

- ❖ All Indian armed forces comprising Indian Army, Indian Navy and Indian Air Force hold joint exercise Bull Strike at Teressa Island in Andaman and Nicobar.
- ❖ The objective is to enhance their coordination in dealing with major security challenges which are currently facing the country and also to showcase joint operation capability of the three forces and further enhance operation coordination.

### **Mosquito Disease Protection Policy**

- ❖ HDFC ERGO General Insurance Company launched a scheme termed 'Mosquito Disease Protection Policy'.
- ❖ It will cover a person against common mosquito-borne diseases, namely, Dengue Fever, Malaria, Chikungunya, Japanese Encephalitis, Kala-azar, Lymphatic Filariasis and Zika Virus.
- ❖ There has been a stark rise of 300% dengue cases in India between 2009-2017, according to the report published by National Health Profile 2018.

### **Parliamentary Polls 2019**

- ❖ The 2019 Indian general election was held in seven phases from 11 April to 19 May 2019 to constitute the 17th Lok Sabha.
- ❖ About 900 million Indian citizens were eligible to vote the elections.
- ❖ The 2019 elections attracted a turnout of over 67.11 % – the highest ever in the history of Indian general elections.
- ❖ This is as opposed to 66.4% voter turnout in the 2014 Parliamentary Elections, which will now be the second highest voter turnout in general elections in India.



## **SIMBEX - 19**

- ❖ Indian Navy Ships (INS) Kolkata and Shakti participated in the SIMBEX-2019 from 16 May to 22 May 19 at Singapore.
- ❖ The Singapore India Maritime Bilateral Exercise (SIMBEX) is an annual bilateral naval exercise conducted by the Indian Navy and the Republic of Singapore Navy.
- ❖ It was started in 1993.
- ❖ In addition to INS Kolkata and INS Shakthi, the long-range maritime patrol aircraft Poseidon-8I (P8I) also participated in the maritime exercise.

## **31 Judges**

- ❖ The Supreme Court has reached its full sanctioned strength with appointment of 4 new judges to the apex court.
- ❖ The total sanctioned strength of Supreme Court is 31 (30 + 1).
- ❖ It includes 30 Supreme Court Judges and the Chief Justice of India (CJI).
- ❖ The length of their term is from their joining till they retire at the age of 65.
- ❖ The four new judges are
  - Justice Aniruddha Bose
  - Justice Surya Kant
  - Justice A S Bopanna
  - Justice B R Gavai

## **RISAT 2B**

- ❖ The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) has successfully launched RISAT-2B satellite on May 22.
- ❖ RISAT 2B stands for “Radar Imaging Satellite-2B”.
- ❖ It will be used in the following fields and purposes
  - Agriculture, Disaster Management and Forestry
  - All weather monitoring
  - Day and Night imaging of places
  - Study of small objects and surveillance
- ❖ Other RISAT Family of Satellites

RISAT-2	First satellite in the series launched for the purpose of surveillance
RISAT-1	India's first all-weather radar imaging satellite.



- ❖ RISAT-2B is to be followed by RISAT-2BR1, 2BR2, RISAT-1A, 1B, 2A and so on.
- ❖ A constellation of such space-based radars enables a comprehensive vigil over the country.
- ❖ For more on RISAT please go here:  
<https://www.tnpscthervupettagam.com/isros-risat-2br1/>

## **BrahMos Air**

- ❖ The Indian Air Force (IAF) successfully fired the BrahMos Air version missile from its frontline Su-30 MKI fighter aircraft.
- ❖ It is a 2.5-ton supersonic Air-to-surface cruise missile with ranges of close to 300 km, designed and developed by BAPL.
- ❖ This is the second such live launch of the weapon.
- ❖ The IAF became the first Air Force in the world to have successfully fired an air launched 2.8 Mach surface attack missile of this category on a sea target on 22 November 17.

## **BAPL**

- ❖ The BrahMos Aerospace Limited (BAPL) is a joint venture between
  - The Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) of India
  - Federal State Unitary Enterprise NPO Mashinostroyenia (NPOM) of Russia

## **BrahMos Aerospace Limited**

<b>Type</b>	Government-owned corporation
<b>Industry</b>	Defense
<b>Founded</b>	New Delhi, India (February 12, 1998)
<b>Headquarters</b>	New Delhi, India
<b>Key people</b>	Dr. Sudhir Kumar Mishra Chief Executive Officer and Managing Director
<b>Products</b>	Cruise missile
<b>Total assets</b>	US\$5 billion (2013)

## No Leader of Opposition

- ❖ In a repeat of 16th Lok Sabha in 2014, the lower house of the Parliament may again not have a leader of opposition (LOP) between 2019-24.
- ❖ The post of leader of opposition has received “Statutory recognition” through the Salary and Allowances of Leaders of Opposition in Parliament Act, 1977.
- ❖ It states that the concerned party must have at least 10% of the total strength of the House (55 seats in the Lok Sabha).
- ❖ Otherwise the House will not have recognized leader of the opposition.
- ❖ LOP can only be awarded to the leader of a single largest opposition political party
- ❖ It cannot be given to the leader of an alliance, even if the alliance was formed prior to the election.
- ❖ The First official leader of opposition in Lok Sabha was Ram Subhag Singh.
- ❖ He was appointed in 1969 and belonged to Congress (O) party.

## Rifles and Guards

- ❖ The Director Generals of Assam Rifles and Indian Coast Guard signed a ‘Affiliation Charter’ in a ceremony held at Shillong.
- ❖ It aims to enhance inter-armed forces cooperation between two and utilise each other’s assets for training and sports.



- ❖ The agreement was signed between 3rd (Naga Hills) Battalion of Assam Rifles and Indian Coast Guard (ICG) Ship ‘Shaurya’.



- ❖ This “affiliation charter” will facilitate the ‘Sentinels of the North East’ (Assam Rifles) to interact with ‘Sentinels of the Seas’ (Indian Coast Guard) on professional level as well as social platforms.

### **3rd (Naga Hills) Battalion of AR**

- ❖ It is the oldest battalion of the Assam Rifles raised in 1835 as ‘The Cachar Levy’.
- ❖ It was a quasi-military entity.
- ❖ Originally it was started with 750 members under the command of Mr. Grange, a British civil officer in charge of the Nowgong district, Assam.
- ❖ It was entrusted with guarding the Eastern Frontier of Assam from Brahmaputra river to the Cachar Hills.
- ❖ Presently the battalion is developed at Kohima, Nagaland.
- ❖ At Kohima it bravely fought the Japanese in World War-II and stopped their advance into India.

### **Women Parliamentarians**

- ❖ With 78 elected women MPs, the 17th Lok Sabha will have the highest number of women representatives in the history of Indian Parliament.
- ❖ They will account for 14.39% of the entire strength of the Lower House.
- ❖ It was at 12.5% with a total 65 women MPs in the previous Lok Sabha.
- ❖ Women candidates also displayed a higher winnability factor or strike rate.
- ❖ They had a high winning ratio of 10.89%. (78 winners out of 716 contestants) than male candidates who’s winning ratio is just 6.41%.

### **Indigenous Bio-fuel**

- ❖ Indian Air Force’s (IAF’s) AN-32 aircraft was formally fleet “certified” to fly on blended aviation fuel containing up to 10% of indigenous bio-jet fuel.
- ❖ The indigenous bio-jet fuel was first produced by the CSIR-IIP (Council of Scientific & Industrial Research - Indian Institute of Petroleum) lab at Dehradun in 2013
- ❖ It is made using Jatropha oil sourced from Chattisgarh Biodiesel Development Authority (CBDA).
- ❖ This bio-fuel would be produced from Tree Borne Oils (TBOs) sourced from tribal areas and farmers.
- ❖ Thus it can augment their income substantially.



### **New Space India Ltd**

- ❖ The Indian Space Research Organisation's (ISRO) new commercial arm called NewSpace India Limited (NSIL) was officially inaugurated in Bengaluru.
- ❖ NSIL is provided an authorised share capital worth Rs.100 crore and initial paid up capital of Rs.10 crore.
- ❖ Its main objective is to scale up industry participation in Indian space programmes.
- ❖ The first commercial venture of Department of Space was Antrix Corporation Limited.
- ❖ It was set up in September 1992 to market products and services of Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO).

### **Missing Man Formation**

- ❖ Chief of the Air Staff, Air Chief Marshal BS Dhanoa led a four aircraft, MiG-21 'Missing Man' formation flypast at Air Force Station Bhisiana in Bhatinda, Punjab.
- ❖ This is an Arrow Formation, with a gap between two aircraft in the formation depicting the Missing Man.
- ❖ It was held to honour the sacrifice of men killed in action during Operation Safed Sagar at Kargil.
- ❖ Operation Safed Sagar was the code name assigned to the Indian Air Force's role in acting jointly with Ground troops during the Kargil war.

### **Akash-MK-1S**

- ❖ Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) has successfully test fired AKASH-MK-1S missile from Chandipur, Odhisa.
- ❖ AKASH Mk1S is a surface to air missile which can neutralize advanced aerial targets.
- ❖ This supersonic missile has a range of around 25 km and up to the altitude of 18,000 metres.
- ❖ The other variants of the missile with improved accuracy and higher ranges under development by the DRDO are Akash MK1, Akash-MK2.



## Full Body Protector

- ❖ For the first time, women police and paramilitary personnel in India will have customised “women centric” body protection gear or full body protector (FBP).
- ❖ The FBP can withstand various threats as it is anti-stab, anti-puncture, anti-impact and fire and acid resistant.
- ❖ It is developed by the Defence Institute of Physiology & Allied Science (DIPAS), New Delhi.
- ❖ Established in 1962, DIPAS functions under DRDO.
- ❖ It works for optimization of human performance in different occupational environment conditions using physiological, biochemical, nutritional and ergonomic approach.
- ❖ DRDO will grant five licences for mass manufacture of the product.

BODY PROTECTOR		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Ergonomically designed, using Indian anthropometric data of female troops</li> <li>➤ Lightweight ensemble provides close-combat protection to most vulnerable parts of the body in riot situations, against projectiles and possible threats</li> </ul>		<p>and lower protection separately as per riot situation demand</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Anti-stab and puncture; also offers protection against shrapnel</li> <li>➤ Anti-impact so as to save the wearer from sudden impact (kicks, rod or cane attacks)</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Comes in three sizes – small, medium and large – to provide for female troops of all ethnicity</li> <li>➤ Option of wearing upper</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ <b>Fire and acid resistant:</b> Gives user time to discard the ensemble in severe fire incidences and prevents acids being thrown at them</li> </ul>	

## All-Women crew flies Mi-17

- ❖ An all-women crew of the Indian Air Force flew a medium-lift helicopter on May 27 for the first time in India.
- ❖ The crew comprised Flight Lieutenant Parul Bhardwaj, who was led the team, Flying Officer Aman Nidhi and Flight Lieutenant Hina Jaiswal.
- ❖ Bhardwaj is the first woman pilot to fly the Mi-17 V5 helicopter.

- ❖ Hina Jaiswal is the first woman flight engineer of the Indian Air Force.
- ❖ Aman Nidhi is the first woman Indian Air Force pilot from Jharkhand state.
- ❖ The helicopter was certified airworthy by Squadron Leader Richa Adhikari, who is the unit engineering officer.



Flt Lt Hina Jaiswal, Flt Lt Parul Bhardwaj, Fg Offr Aman Nidhi, Sqn Ldr Richa Adhikari

## INTERNATIONAL

### Japan's Emperor

- ❖ Japan's new Emperor Naruhito ascended the Chrysanthemum Throne.
- ❖ The Reiwa era officially begins from May 1, 2019.
- ❖ Usually Japan's eras are named after Chinese classics.
- ❖ In the last 1300 years, Reiwa is the first time an era is named after Japanese classic literature.
- ❖ Naruhito is the 126th emperor of Japan.
- ❖ This is the world's oldest hereditary monarchy from the 5th century.
- ❖ Naruhito was preceded by Emperor Akihito and Heisei era.

### Hormuz Strait



- ❖ Due to increasing tension with the United States, Iran warns to shut down the strategic Hormuz Strait.
- ❖ Hormuz strait is a vital shipping route linking Middle East oil producers to markets in Asia, Europe, North America and beyond.
- ❖ The Strait is 33 km wide at its narrowest point.
- ❖ The shipping lane is just 3 km wide in either direction.
- ❖ Almost a fifth of global oil trade passes through Hormuz Strait.
- ❖ Nearly all Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) produced by Qatar shipped through this route.
- ❖ Qatar is world's largest producer of LNG.

### **Global food policy report**

- ❖ International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) has recently released Global Food Policy Report-2019.
- ❖ IFPRI's this flagship report reviews the major food policy issues, developments, and decisions of 2018, and considers challenges and opportunities for 2019.

#### **Major Findings**

- ❖ Rural population account for 45.3% of the world's total population.
- ❖ At least 70% of the world's population remains extremely poor.
- ❖ Nearly 50% of rural youth all over the world do not have any formal job they are either unemployed or under-employed.
- ❖ The world is not yet on track to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030.
- ❖ South Asia remained the fastest growing region in the World in 2018.
- ❖ India is the home to 70 percent of the region's rural population.

### **Indo-French joint navy exercise**

- ❖ India and France are conducting their joint naval exercise, known as Varuna 19.1.
- ❖ It is being conducted off the coast of Goa from May 1 to May 10.
- ❖ It is the 17<sup>th</sup> edition of the bilateral naval exercise.
- ❖ The exercise will be conducted in two phases.
- ❖ The harbour phase at Goa would include cross-visits, professional interactions and discussions and sports events.



- ❖ The sea phase would comprise various exercises across the spectrum of maritime operations.
- ❖ The second part of the naval exercise, Varuna 19.2, is scheduled at the end of May in Djibouti.
- ❖ This bilateral naval exercise initiated in 1983 and christened as 'Varuna' in 2001.

### **ADMM plus Exercise on Maritime Security & Counter Terrorism - multinational exercise**

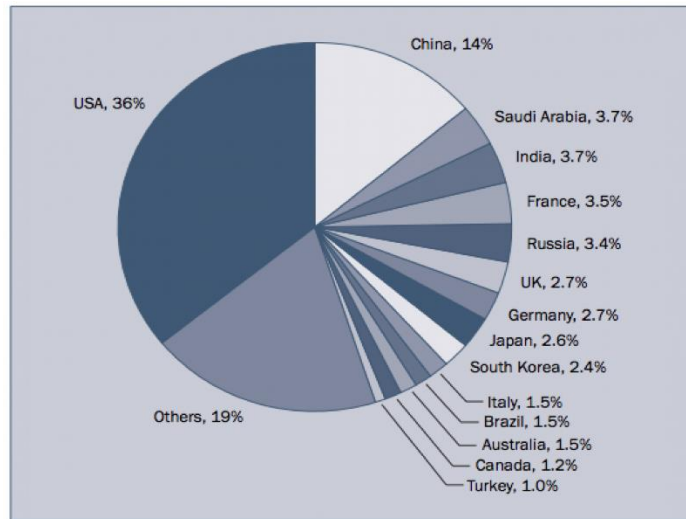
- ❖ The Naval Ships INS Kolkata and INS Shakti of India reached Brunei to take part in the ADMM Plus (ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting Plus) Exercise.
- ❖ This is the Maritime Security and Counter Terrorism from 01 to 09 May.
- ❖ ADMM plus Exercise on Maritime Security & Counter Terrorism is a multinational exercise of ADMM Plus countries group.
- ❖ This edition will commence at Brunei and conclude at Singapore.
- ❖ During the course of the exercise the Indian Navy would engage with participating navies from various ASEAN and other countries through professional interactions in harbour and complex operations at sea.

#### **ADMM-Plus**

- ❖ The ADMM-Plus is a platform of the 10-member bloc.
- ❖ It consists of ASEAN, and its eight dialogue partners.
- ❖ The aim of the ADMM-Plus is to strengthen the security and defence cooperation among the member countries of the grouping.

### **World's military spending report**

- ❖ Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) released the World's military spending report for the year 2018.
- ❖ According to a new report overall global military spending last year rose up 2.6 per cent from the previous year.
- ❖ The five biggest spenders in 2018 were the United States, China, Saudi Arabia, India and France.
- ❖ US increased for the first time since 2010 and that of China went up for the 24<sup>th</sup> consecutive year.



### 17<sup>th</sup> world Economic Forum

- ❖ The 17<sup>th</sup> edition of the World Economic Forum in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) took place at Jordan's Dead Sea.
- ❖ The forum was themed on following three major visions:
  - Generating job opportunities,
  - Empowering Arab women and
  - Promoting the most intriguing start-ups.

### Loya Jirga

- ❖ Afghanistan has convened its rare and largest loya jirga recently.
- ❖ Loya jirga means “grand assembly” in Pashto.
- ❖ The meeting was convened to decide a possible foreign troop withdrawal from Afghanistan
- ❖ The troop withdrawal would come in exchange for a permanent ceasefire and various Taliban pledges.

### Venice Art Event

- ❖ The 58th Venice Biennale will be held in Venice, Italy.
- ❖ It is one of the biggest art events in the world.
- ❖ 16 of the 400 Haripura session posters will be displayed by India.
- ❖ Haripura posters were first put up in the Haripura Congress Session, 1938.



- ❖ Mahatma Gandhi requested the famous painter Nandalal Bose to create them.
- ❖ Haripura session was presided by Subash Chandra Bose.

### **NATO Commander**

- ❖ US Air Force General Tod D. Wolters has been sworn in as the 19th Supreme Allied Commander Europe of NATO.
- ❖ The North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) is a military alliance between 29 North American and European countries.
- ❖ NATO constitutes a system of collective defence.
- ❖ It implies that all member states have agreed to mutual defence in response to an attack by any external party.
- ❖ It was formed on 4th April, 1949.
- ❖ It is head quartered at Brussels, Belgium.
- ❖ Jens Stoltenberg is the Secretary General of NATO.

### **Global Registry of Violent Deaths**

- ❖ Stockholm International peace research institute (SIPRI) has launched a new initiative named Global Registry of Violent Deaths (GReVD).
- ❖ It aims to establish the annual number of violent deaths worldwide.
- ❖ GReVD will count deaths caused by all forms of violence and display these in an open-source database.
- ❖ It enables monitoring of progress on the world's commitment to 'significantly reduce all forms of violence and related death rates everywhere' by 2030 (SDG-Goal 16).
- ❖ The database will hold a single entry for every violent death, including time, location, perpetrator, victim and type of violence.
- ❖ The first-phase of the project is funded by the Swedish Postcode Foundation and the United Kingdom's Department for International Development.

### **SIPRI**

- ❖ SIPRI is an international institute based in Sweden and Established in 1966.
- ❖ It dedicated to research into conflict, armaments, arms control and disarmament.
- ❖ It provides data, analysis and recommendations, based on open sources, to policymakers, researchers, media and the interested public.





### **New Aircraft super-carrier**

- ❖ The United Kingdom is in talks with India for building a new state-of-the-art aircraft carrier.
- ❖ It will be named INS Vishal and commissioned in 2022.
- ❖ The project is a part of 'Make in India'.
- ❖ INS Vishal is planned to be similar to the 65,000-ton HMS Queen Elizabeth.
- ❖ HMS Queen Elizabeth is Britain's largest aircraft super-carrier capable of carrying up to 60 warcrafts.
- ❖ Earlier, Britain had sold HMS Hermes in 1987 to India.
- ❖ It was renamed and used INS Viraat till 2017.

### **Sri Lankan Easter Blasts**

- ❖ The Sri Lankan terrorist organisation National Thowheed Jamaath (NTJ) had orchestrated a series of coordinated attacks on Easter Sunday (April 21) in Sri Lanka.
- ❖ The attacks killed over 350 people and injured many.
- ❖ Islamic State (IS) has claimed responsibility for the attacks through its Amaq news agency.
- ❖ Taking responsibility for the suicide bomber attacks on the country, Sri Lankan Defence Secretary Hemasiri Fernando had resigned.

### **South China Sea drill**

- ❖ Warships from India, the US, Japan and Philippines have conducted six-day naval drills (May 03 – 09) in the contentious South China sea.
- ❖ The coordinated group sail participants are

Country	Ship
India	Destroyer INS Kolkata and fleet tanker INS Shakti
USA	Destroyer USS Williams P Lawrence
Japan	Aircraft carrier JMSDF Izumo
Philippines	Frigate BRP Andres Bonifaci

- ❖ For a short read about South China sea dispute please go to News dated 18.07.17  
Link: <https://www.tnpscthervupettagam.com/indonesia-renamed-part-of-south-china-sea/>



## **Fake News**

- ❖ Singapore has passed a law (The Protection from Online Falsehoods and Manipulation Bill) which criminalises publication of fake news in country.
- ❖ It also allows government to block and order removal of such content.
- ❖ It bans false news that are detrimental to Singapore or false news that may likely influence elections.

## **Vice President at Vietnam**

- ❖ Vice President of India M. Venkaiah Naidu commenced his four-day official visit to Vietnam on 9 May 2019.
- ❖ He will participate in the '16th United Nations Day of Vesak' celebration at Tam Chuc pagoda.
- ❖ Vesak (also known as Buddha Jayanti or Buddha Purnima) is celebrated to commemorate birth of Lord Buddha, his attainment of enlightenment (nirvana) and his passing away.
- ❖ Its date changes every year based on lunar calendar.

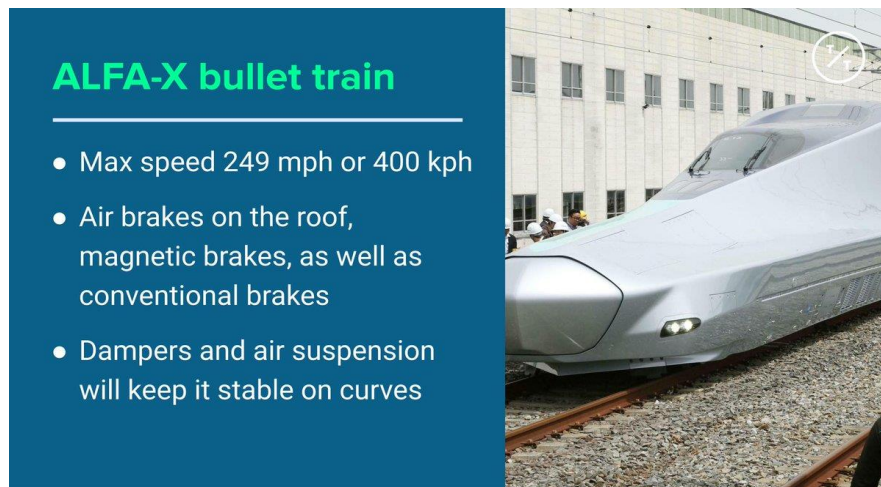
## **New President of UN General Assembly**

- ❖ Professor Tijjani Mohammad Bande has been appointed as the new President of the United Nations General Assembly.
- ❖ His appointment was announced by María Fernanda Espinosa Garcés, outgoing president of UNGA.
- ❖ Bande becomes the second Nigerian to be appointed President of UNGA after Mr. Joseph Nanven Garba who held the position between 1989 and 1990.



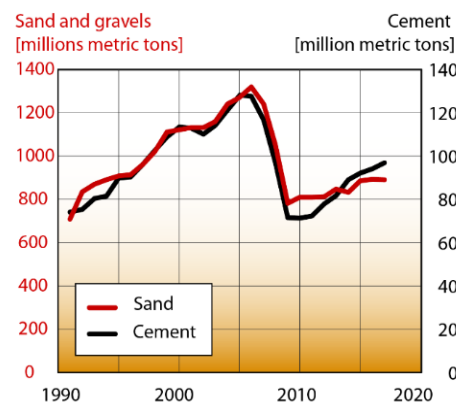
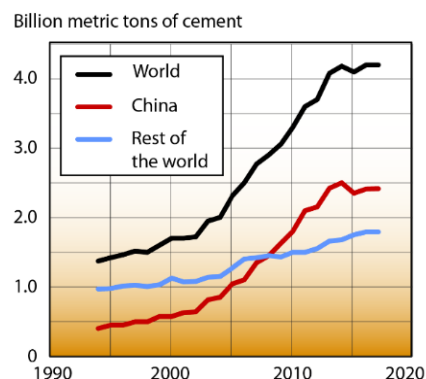
## Japan's fastest-ever bullet train

- ❖ Japan has begun testing the ALFA-X version of its fastest-ever Shinkansen bullet train that could reach 400 km per hour (249 mph).
- ❖ The bullet train ALFA-X (Advanced Labs for Frontline Activity in Rail Experimentation) is scheduled to start its service in 2030.
- ❖ In addition to usual brakes, the ALFA-X will have air brakes on the roof and also use magnetic plates near the rails to decrease speed while slowing down.



## UNEP Report on Sand Mining

- ❖ United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) has recently released a report on sand mining and its consumption.
- ❖ The report published with title - Sand and sustainability: Finding new solutions for environmental governance of global sand resources.





- ❖ It emphasises on the changing pattern of sand consumption, demand and role in growing population.
- ❖ As per the report China and India head the list of critical hotspots for sand extraction impacts in rivers, lakes and on coastlines.
- ❖ Two thirds of global cement production occur in China (58.5%) and India (6.6%), as per United States Geological Survey.

### **Train to Nepal**

- ❖ Nepal has signed an agreement with Konkan Railways to procure 2 Diesel Electric Multiple Unit (DEMU) train sets.
- ❖ These trains will be used to operationalise the 34 km long railway corridor which connects Jayanagar in Bihar and Kurtha in Nepal.
- ❖ The trains will be manufactured by Integrated Coach Factory in Chennai, Tamil Nadu.

### **Underweight Babies**

- ❖ According to new research published in the Lancet Global Health, more than 20 million babies were born with a low birthweight (2500 grams or 5.5 pounds).
- ❖ South Asia has almost half of the world's low birthweight livebirths with an estimated 9.8 million in 2015.
- ❖ More than 80% of the world's 2.5 million newborns who die every year are low birthweight.
- ❖ India has made progress in improving newborn care by building 834 newborn care units in the last decade.

### **Cause and Effect**

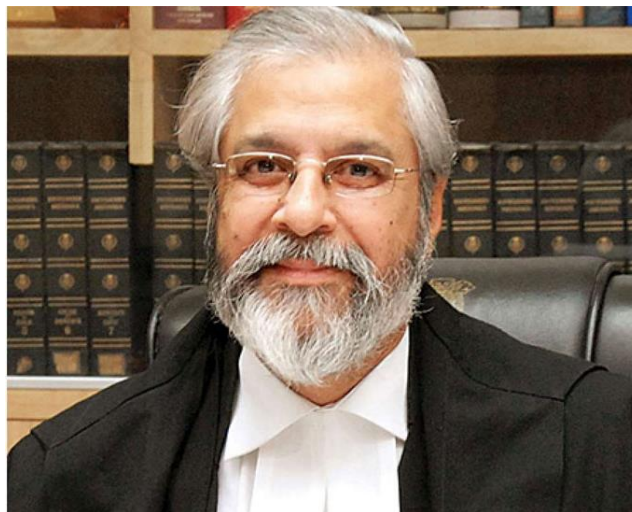
- ❖ Low birthweight is due to being born too soon (preterm or before 37 weeks of pregnancy) or too small (growth restricted in utero) or both.
- ❖ Causes of low birthweight are
  - maternal age (both adolescents and older women)
  - infections, obesity or undernutrition
  - smoking and environmental exposures
  - multiple pregnancies and non-medical Caesarean sections.
- ❖ Low birthweight babies who survive have a greater risk of stunting and poor development.

### Christchurch Call

- ❖ The French President Emmanuel Macron and New Zealand's Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern will launch a new initiative called "Christchurch Call".
- ❖ It is a non-binding set of agreements that a group of governments and major tech companies will sign.
- ❖ It is a first-of-its-kind document as it is signed by both private companies and major governments.
- ❖ It will ask signatory nations to pledge to eliminate terrorist and violent extremist content on social media and other online platforms.
- ❖ India has signed it.
- ❖ The Christchurch mosque shootings were two consecutive terrorist attacks at mosques in Christchurch, New Zealand, during Friday Namaz on 15 March, 2019.

### Indian Judge in Fiji

- ❖ The Former Justice of Supreme Court of India Madhan Lokur has become the first judge from the Indian apex court to be appointed to the Supreme Court of Fiji.
- ❖ He will be a part of the non-resident panel for a period of three years.



- ❖ Justice Lokur was a part of the Mediation Committee of the Supreme Court of India since 2005.
- ❖ This initiative had led to the settlement of around 2 lakh cases.
- ❖ For related news about International recognition for Indian Supreme court judges please go here: <https://www.tnpscthervupettagam.com/jamaicas-aadhar/>



## **US Immigration**

- ❖ The United States President Donald Trump has introduced a legislation to form a merit-based immigration system.
- ❖ It grants permanent legal residency based on points for people based on age, knowledge, job opportunities and civic sense.
- ❖ Immigrants will also be required to learn English and pass a civics exam prior to admission.
- ❖ Current immigration system mostly favours applicants with family ties to the US.
- ❖ Indian professionals and skilled workers, waiting to get Green Cards or permanent legal residency, stand to benefit the most.

## **Privileged Iqama-Saudi Green Card**

- ❖ For the first time, the Cabinet of Saudi Arabia approved to give permanent residency to certain expatriates by allowing them to own real estates.
- ❖ They are eligible to reside with their families without a Saudi sponsor (Kafeel).
- ❖ This new system is named as the “Privileged Iqama”.
- ❖ The owned residence under the “Privileged Iqama” system can be renewed annually.
- ❖ The scheme is commonly called as the Saudi Green Card.
- ❖ Three years ago, this was announced for the first time by the Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman as a part of Vision 2030 plan.

## **Mosquito Disease Protection Policy**

- ❖ HDFC ERGO General Insurance Company launched a scheme termed ‘Mosquito Disease Protection Policy’.
- ❖ It will cover a person against common mosquito-borne diseases, namely, Dengue Fever, Malaria, Chikungunya, Japanese Encephalitis, Kala-azar, Lymphatic Filariasis and Zika Virus.
- ❖ There has been a stark rise of 300% dengue cases in India between 2009-2017, according to the report published by National Health Profile 2018.





### **New guided missile destroyers**

- ❖ The Chinese Navy has commissioned two new Type 052D Luyang III-class guided missile destroyers which is dubbed “Chinese Aegis” in Dalian.
- ❖ They are the 19th and 20th ships in the class and are named as Tangshan and Suzhou.
- ❖ China, at present, has 20 Type 052Ds either in active service or to be launched for service soon.
- ❖ The destroyers are fast and warships are operated for long distances. In addition, they can be used to accompany the aircraft carriers.
- ❖ For the first time in its history, the Chinese navy has logistics bases in Djibouti in the Indian Ocean.

### **Dangerous Huawei Mobiles**

- ❖ Due to security concerns and as per U.S. government order, Google has stopped providing non-public hardware or software to telecom company Huawei.
- ❖ It is expected to severely impact the Chinese device maker’s ability to create new smartphones and update existing ones.
- ❖ Huawei is the second leading provider of Android devices, next to Samsung.
- ❖ It was founded in 1987 at Shenzhen by Ren Zhengfei, an engineer who had served in the Chinese People’s Liberation Army (PLA).
- ❖ Huawei’s first research and development centre outside China was established in Bengaluru in 1999.



## **Landing Cards**

- ❖ The UK government has scrapped the requirement of filling out landing cards by international travellers coming to the UK from countries outside of the European Economic Area.
- ❖ This is a part of a series of measures aimed at a "smoother" entry into Britain.
- ❖ Indians are also exempted from filling landing cards upon arrival.

## **EEA**

- ❖ The Agreement on the European Economic Area (EEA) entered into force on 1 January 1994.
- ❖ The Agreement on the EEA brings together
  - The European Union Member States
  - Three EEA States: Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway
- ❖ These countries form a single market, referred to as the "Internal Market".
- ❖ Switzerland is not part of the EEA Agreement.

## **Election Result Violence**

- ❖ Joko Widodo was on May 21, 2019 re-elected as President of Indonesia for the second term, defeating rival Prabowo Subianto.
- ❖ Supporters of the opposition party and Prabowo Subianto have refused to "concede defeat" resulting in mass protests and violence.
- ❖ The worst rioting occurred outside the headquarters of Indonesia's elite Brimob police unit. 6 people have been killed and 250 injured so far.

## **Preserving Heritage**

- ❖ The Parsi community has "digitalised" its prayers to save its age-old traditions.
- ❖ It is inspired by initiatives like Memory of the World.
- ❖ Memory of the World Programme is an international initiative launched by UNESCO in 1992.
- ❖ The objective of the program is to safeguard the documentary heritage of humanity.
- ❖ It calls for the preservation of valuable archival holdings, library collections, for future generations.



### Hot Pursuit

- ❖ The Indian Coast Guard (ICG) gave a “hot pursuit” and apprehended a Pakistani fishing vessel off Gujarat coast.
- ❖ It seized huge cache of narcotic drugs worth ₹600 crore.
- ❖ The doctrine of maritime “hot pursuit” is codified in Article 111 of the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS).
- ❖ It recognizes the right of a State to pursue a vessel belonging to a foreign State, which has violated any law within its territorial boundaries and jurisdiction.
- ❖ It also allows to pursue the enemy vessel outside the territorial limits into the open sea and then to take into custody.

### Asian Track

- ❖ The Asian Development Bank (ADB) has signed an agreement to electrify railway tracks in India under Railways Track Electrification Project.
- ❖ As per agreement ADB will provide \$750 million long-term financing to Indian Railway Finance Corporation (IRFC).
- ❖ It is the largest single non-sovereign loan ever committed by ADB to a member country.

### Indian Railway Finance Corporation (IRFC)

- ❖ IRFC was set up in 1986.
- ❖ It raises financial resources for expansion of railways.
- ❖ It started borrowing from market in 1997.
- ❖ It raises money through financial bonds and from banks and financial institutions



## **Indo-Myanmar CORPAT**

- ❖ The eighth edition of the Indo-Myanmar coordinated patrol (CORPAT) began on May 20, 2019 at Andaman and Nicobar Islands.
- ❖ Myanmar Navy Ships UMS King TabinShweHtee (773) and UMS Inlay (OPV-54) will be joined by INS Sarayu.
- ❖ The ships would patrol along the International Maritime Boundary Line (IMBL) between the two countries.
- ❖ They would patrol a distance of approximately 725 Kms over a period of 4 days.
- ❖ The CORPAT aims to tackle issues of terrorism, illegal fishing, drug trafficking, human trafficking, poaching and other illegal activities affecting both countries.

## **Commercialisation of Arctic**

- ❖ Russia has launched a nuclear-powered icebreaker called Ural.
- ❖ It is a part of an ambitious programme to improve Russia's ability to tap the Arctic's commercial potential.
- ❖ 2 more icebreakers Arktika (Arctic) and Sibir (Siberia) are being built by Russia.
- ❖ In light of warmer climates, Russia is building new infrastructure and overhauling its ports.
- ❖ It readies for more traffic via what it calls the Northern Sea Route (NSR) which it envisages being navigable year-round.

### **Northern Sea Route**

- ❖ The Northern Sea Route is a shipping route defined by Russia as lying east of Novaya Zemlya and specifically running along the Russian Arctic coast from the Kara Sea, along Siberia, to the Bering Strait.
- ❖ The entire route lies in Arctic waters and within Russia's exclusive economic zone (EEZ).
- ❖ Parts are free of ice for only two months per year.
- ❖ Melting Arctic ice caps are likely to increase traffic in and the commercial viability of the Northern Sea Route.
- ❖ This route may increase heavy shipping traffic in the Arctic and a substantial drop in Suez traffic.
- ❖ Projected shifts in trade also imply substantial pressure on an already threatened Arctic ecosystem.



## Chagos Island Dispute

- ❖ The UN General Assembly passed a resolution asking the U.K. to withdraw its “colonial administration” from the Chagos Archipelago within six months.
- ❖ Chagos is officially part of the British Indian Ocean Territory (BIOT).
- ❖ Mauritius wants its sovereignty over the islands restored.

### A history of dispute

Period	Who ran Chagos Archipelago
18th Century	Chagos was part of Mauritius and ruled by France
1810	UK captured Mauritius
1965	Independence of Mauritius. But British illegally created (BIOT)
1966	US naval base set up in Diego Garcia (Biggest island of Chagos)
2017	UN intervention. Asks ICJ to decide legality of British possession of BIOT
2019	International court of Justice (ICJ) issues “advisory” to British to withdraw from Chagos.

## Anti Venom Strategy

- ❖ The World Health Organization had unveiled a new strategy to reduce deaths and injuries from snakebites.
- ❖ It has warned that a dearth of “antivenoms” could soon spark a global public health emergency.





- ❖ In 2017 WHO had categorised “snakebite envenoming” as a Neglected Tropical Disease.
- ❖ WHO insisted on the need for a 25-percent increase in the number of competent manufacturers by 2030.

### **Treatment in India**

- ❖ Polyvalent anti-snake venom (ASV) injection is the main treatment for snake-bites in India.
- ❖ It is effective against all the four common species - Russell’s viper, common cobra, common Krait and saw-scaled viper.
- ❖ The six most poisonous snakes in India are
  - Indian Cobra
  - King Cobra
  - Indian Pit Viper
  - Russell’s Viper (also called Koriwala)
  - Saw-scaled Viper
  - Indian Krait

### **UN Habitat Assembly**

- ❖ India has been elected to the Executive Board of the first UN-Habitat Assembly at the Plenary Session of the Assembly started on May 27, 2019 in Nairobi, Kenya.
- ❖ The special theme for the UN-Habitat Assembly is "Innovation for Better Quality of Life in Cities and Communities".
- ❖ The UN habitat assembly was started in 1978 with Nairobi as headquarters.
- ❖ It is an UN agency to promote socially and environmentally sustainable towns & cities with the goal of providing adequate shelter for all.

### **Colombo Port**

- ❖ Sri Lanka, Japan and India have signed an agreement to jointly develop the East Container Terminal (ECT) at the Colombo Port in Srilanka.
- ❖ The ECT is located very near the China-backed international financial city in Colombo known popularly as “Port city”.
- ❖ Over 70 % of the transshipment business at the strategically located ECT is linked to India.





## ECONOMY

### FC5 - Potatoes

- ❖ PepsiCo Inc has sued four Gujarati farmers for cultivating FC5 Potato variety.
- ❖ Pepsi alleges patent infringement.
- ❖ Pepsi uses FC5 exclusively for its popular Lay's potato chips.
- ❖ FC5 has low moisture content.
- ❖ Lower moisture content enables easy processing of this variety into snacks.
- ❖ Potato is one of the 151 crop species open for registration in India under the PPV&FR Act

### Protection of Plant Variety and Farmers Right Act

- ❖ This act was passed in 2001.
- ❖ Objectives of the act
  - Protection of plant varieties
  - Protect rights of farmers and plant breeders
  - Encourage the development and cultivation of new varieties of plants.

### Tax Evasion

- ❖ The Income Tax Department and the Goods and Services Tax Network (GSTN) plan to work together to detect tax evasion.
- ❖ An MoU will be signed that will allow the two entities to match their data.
- ❖ The amount of income disclosed both under the Income-tax and GST will be verified and checked.
- ❖ The IT department's order provides for the automatic exchange of such data to GSTN.

### GSTN

- ❖ GSTN is jointly registered by the Central and State Governments as a not-for-profit company.
- ❖ It is registered as a company under Section 8 of the Companies act in 2013.
- ❖ The role of GSTN is to provide IT Infrastructure and services to implement GST.

### Technical Textiles

- ❖ The 'National Conclave on Technical Textiles' was held at Coimbatore.
- ❖ At the conclave, Ministry of Textiles has submitted 2 reports on technical textiles.



- ❖ It aims to tap potential of and also how to utilise technical textiles.
- ❖ A technical textile is a textile product manufactured for non-aesthetic purpose and for a specific function.
- ❖ Technical textiles include

Type	Use
<b>Medical textiles</b>	Implants
<b>Agrotextiles</b>	Textiles for crop protection
<b>Geotextiles</b>	Reinforcement of embankments
<b>Protective clothing</b>	Fire proof vests, bulletproof vests, spacesuits
<b>Textiles for automotive sector</b>	Upholstery, lining materials...

### Advisor – Finance Commission

- ❖ The Chief Economic Advisor to Indian government, Dr. Krishnamurthy Subramanian is appointed as 12<sup>th</sup> Member of Advisory Council of Fifteenth Finance Commission (FC).
- ❖ He is expected to advise FC on any relevant matter or subject related to Terms of Reference (ToR) of Commission.

### Finance Commission

- ❖ The first FC was constituted on April 6, 1952 under Chairmanship of KC Negoy.
- ❖ It is constituted under article 280 of Constitution by President of India.
- ❖ FC stipulates the distribution of tax revenues between Union and States and amongst states themselves.
- ❖ It is appointed for a period of five years.
- ❖ It comprises of five members including a chairman and four other members.
- ❖ For details about 15th Finance commission please go here <https://www.tnpscthervupettagam.com/15th-finance-commission-constituted/> (News dated 08.11.17)

### Saccharin

- ❖ India has imposed anti-dumping duty on saccharin imports from Indonesia.
- ❖ This duty will be valid for five years unless it is revoked by government.
- ❖ Saccharin is a non-nutritive sweetener.



- ❖ It is considered to be a low-calorie substitute for cane sugar.
- ❖ It is used in a variety of industries such as
  - Food and beverage
  - Personal care products
  - Table top sweeteners
  - Electroplating brighteners
  - Pharmaceuticals

### Anti-dumping duty

- ❖ Dumping is said to occur when the goods are exported by a country to another country at a price lower than its normal value.
- ❖ This is an unfair trade practice.
- ❖ This has a distortive effect on international trade and damages domestic trade.
- ❖ Anti-dumping is a measure to rectify this situation and establish fair trade.
- ❖ The use of anti-dumping measure as an instrument of fair competition is permitted by the WTO.

### **Co-location scandal**

- ❖ The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) ordered the National Stock Exchange of India (NSE) to pay a fine of about ₹1,000 crore within 45 days for its supervisory laxity.
- ❖ Under NSE co-location facility, brokers can place their servers in the exchange's data centre.
- ❖ But some brokers were given preferential access to the exchange servers.
- ❖ They gained thousands of crores because of this unfair advantage.

### **Swiggy, Zomato**

- ❖ Delhi has emerged as the top destination for migrant workers joining India's tech-enabled **gig economy**. Bengaluru comes distant second.
- ❖ Delhi and Bengaluru have added 560,600 and 252,300 people respectively to its gig economy in the second six months of the financial year 2018-19.
- ❖ The gig economy is led by food delivery firms Swiggy and Zomato, and ride hailing firms Uber and Ola.

### How it works?

- ❖ In a gig economy, temporary, flexible jobs are common.



- ❖ Companies hire more independent contractors and freelancers instead of full-time employees.
- ❖ Employees work with little job security and few benefits.
- ❖ It undermines the traditional economy of full-time workers who rarely change positions and instead focus on a lifetime career.

### Chilli Meal

- ❖ India and China signed a protocol for the export of Indian chilli meal to China.
- ❖ Chilli meal is the residue left after the oil is extracted from chillies.
- ❖ It is the raw material used in manufacturing of chilli sauce and other products.
- ❖ India is the world's largest producer, consumer, and exporter of chilli.
- ❖ Chilli is the largest exported spice from India.
- ❖ China has already allowed market access to these Indian food products.

Product	Year of Agreement
Mango	2003
Bitter Gourd	2005
Grapes	2005
Rapeseed Meal	2015
Basmati Rice	2006
Basmati and Non-Basmati Rice	2018
Fish Meal / Oil	2018
Tobacco Leaves	2019
Chilli Meal	2019

### Class Action Lawsuit

- ❖ The National Company Law Tribunal (Second Amendment) Rules, 2019 have been notified by the Ministry of Corporate Affairs.
- ❖ It has specified the 'thresholds' required for filing Class Action Lawsuits (CAL).
  - Minimum 5% of the members of a company or 100 members, whichever is less



- The same criteria will also be applicable for the depositors of deposit-taking companies.

### **What is a CAL?**

- ❖ CAL is filed when the allegations involve a large number of people (usually 40 or more) who have been injured by the same defendant in the same way.
- ❖ Investors can thus file CAL if they feel that the management or conduct of the affairs of a company are prejudicial to their interests.
- ❖ Example: In 2006, corruption by the executives of American energy firm Enron led to its bankruptcy and erosion of shareholder's wealth.
  - So, investors filed a class action suit against the company and received a compensation of \$ 7.2 Billion.

### **WTO Ministerial Meet**

- ❖ A WTO Ministerial meeting of 16 developing countries and 6 Least Developed Countries (LDCs) is being hosted by India in New Delhi on 13-14 May 2019.
- ❖ The meeting will discuss 2 main issues
  - Deadlock in the appointment of WTO's appellate body members
  - Reforms in World Trade Organisation (WTO)
    - ❖ A country is termed as LDC based on Gross National Income per capita, Human Assets Index and Economic Vulnerability Index.

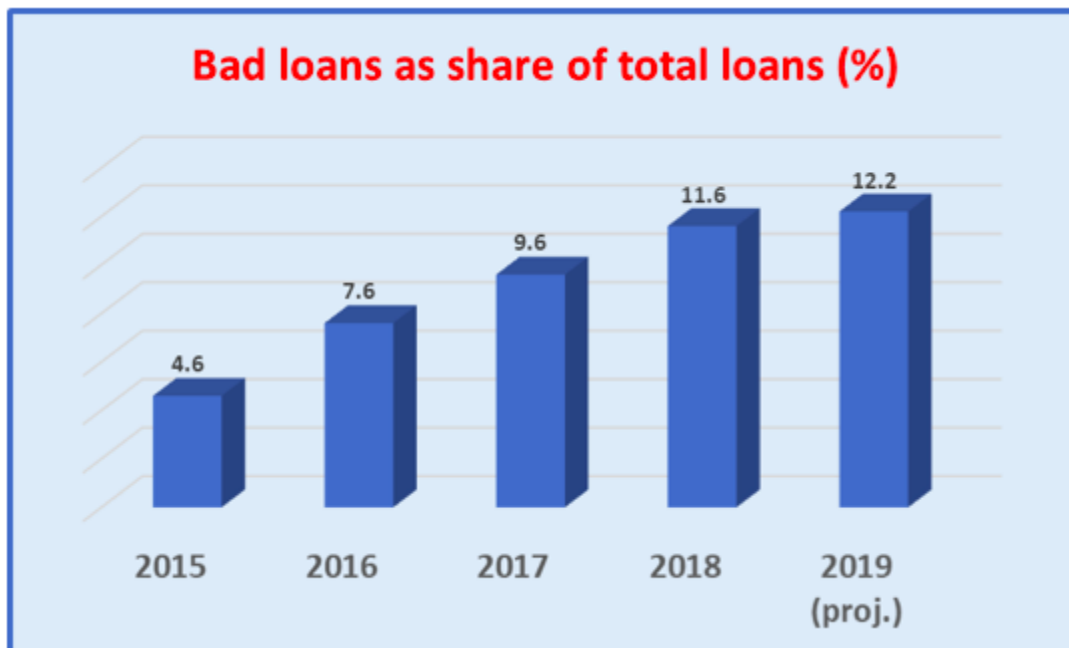
### **Digital Effect**

- ❖ The Reserve Bank of India has put out its vision document for the "Payment and Settlement Systems in India" outlining the roadmap for 2019-2021.
- ❖ The core theme of the vision is 'Empowering Exceptional (e)Payment Experience'.
- ❖ RBI plans to achieve a highly digital and cash-lite society.
- ❖ It expects payment systems like UPI/IMPS to register average annualised growth of over 100% and NEFT at 40% over the vision period.
- ❖ It projects that the 2,069 crore digital transactions in December 2018 may rise to 8,707 crore in December 2021.
- ❖ Payment Systems Vision 2021 has 36 specific action points and 12 specific outcomes.



### Under-reporting Bad Loans

- ❖ Union Bank of India, Indian Bank and Central Bank of India have reported “divergence” in bad loan recognition.
- ❖ Divergence takes place when the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) finds that a bank has
  - Under-reported bad loans
  - Not reported bad loans
- ❖ RBI spotted the “divergence” in their 2018-19 4th quarter financial year results (Jan 2019 – March 2019) because these banks reported “loss”.
- ❖ Their loss was reportedly due to “higher provisioning” for old bad loans which were given in 2017-18 financial year.



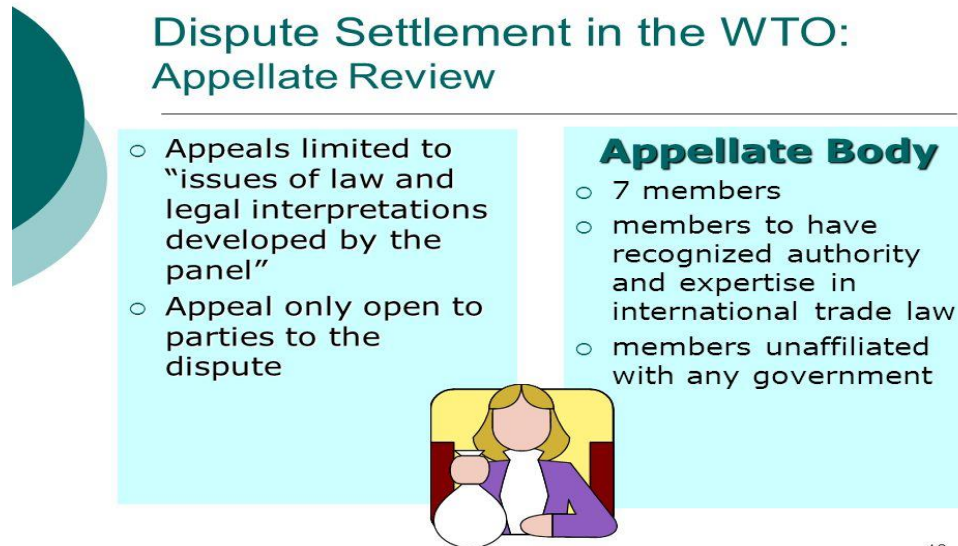
### What is Provisioning?

- ❖ When a loan is not being repaid, the Bank has to reconstitute this Money from its other sources like Profit.
- ❖ Banks setting aside a part of money from Profits to compensate for a probable loss is called Provisioning.
- ❖ Banks do Provisioning to cover the risk.



## WTO Impending Collapse

- ❖ Over 20 developing countries met in New Delhi recently to discuss ways to prevent collapse of World Trade Organization's (WTO's) "Dispute resolution system".



18

- ❖ WTO's Appellate Body is a standing committee of 7 members.
- ❖ It presides over appeals against judgments passed in trade-related disputes brought by WTO members.
- ❖ The WTO's dispute settlement procedure is seen as being vital to ensuring smooth flows of international trade.
- ❖ Over the last two years, the membership of the body has been reduced to just 3 members instead of the required seven.
- ❖ This is because the United States believes that WTO is biased against it and has been blocking appointments.
- ❖ India has so far been a direct participant in 54 disputes and has been involved in 158 as a third party.

## New RBI Cadres

- ❖ The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) is planning to set up a new institute in Mumbai, to be known as the College of Supervisors.
- ❖ It will train and build up a cadre for supervisory roles in the financial system.
- ❖ The institute will provide a one-year specialised training programme for the RBI officials.



- ❖ The officials undergoing training at the institute will be required to go for re-certification every five years in a bid to adapt to any change in technology.

### **Third Party Liability**

- ❖ Insurance regulator IRDAI (Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India) proposed an increase in third party motor insurance premium rates for cars, two-wheelers and school buses to trucks.
- ❖ A motor policy has two main components
  - Third-party liability
  - Own damage
- ❖ The liabilities arising from damage caused to a third party are covered under third party-cover.
- ❖ It does not cover damage to the vehicle or its owner.

### **Chief Risk Officer**

- ❖ The RBI has asked the non-banking financial companies (NBFCs) with assets of more than ₹5,000 crore to appoint a Chief Risk Officer (CRO).
- ❖ Defaults by some huge non-banking financial companies (NBFCs) has led to the liquidity crisis. Ex: Financial crisis in IL&FS
- ❖ The primary role of the CRO will be identification, measurement and mitigation of risks.
- ❖ He should be a senior official in the hierarchy of an NBFC and shall possess adequate professional qualification or experience in the area of risk management.

### **Masala Bonds**

- ❖ The Kerala Infrastructure Investment Fund Board (KIIFB) has issued Masala Bonds to raise funds from the overseas market.
- ❖ Kerala has become the first Indian state to tap into the market for masala bonds.
- ❖ A Masala Bond is a
  - Rupee-denominated bond
  - Settled in US Dollars
  - Subject to English law.
- ❖ A rupee-denominated bonds indicates that the funds would be raised from overseas market in Indian rupees.



- ❖ Kerala plans to use the money raised from the bonds to rebuild the infrastructure that was devastated by last year's floods.
- ❖ KIIFB has listed Masala Bond on the London Stock Exchange on 17.05.19 to tap USD 312 million (₹ 2,150 crore).
- ❖ London Stock Exchange claims to be the largest Masala Bond centre globally, with 49 such rupee-denominated bonds listed across its markets.

## Statistics Department

- ❖ In an order dated May 23 NDA government had announced the merger of the NSSO with CSO under the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation.
- ❖ National Sample Survey Organisation (NSSO) and Central Statistical Office (CSO) will be merged to form the new National Statistical Office (NSO).
- ❖ The proposed NSO would be headed by Secretary (Statistics and Programme Implementation).
- ❖ CSO provides data on economic indicators such as the Gross Domestic Product and Index of Industrial Production.
- ❖ NSSO conducts research on matters such as consumption expenditure and unemployment.
- ❖ The latest data on unemployment reported by the National Sample Survey Office has still Not been made public by Modi government.

## Billion e transactions

- ❖ The Ministry of electronics and information technology (MeitY) has set a target of 40 billion digital transactions in the financial year ending in March 2020.

### **PUSHING E-PAYMENTS TOOLS**

➤ E-wallets saw rapid growth after demonetisation. UPI is now the highlight of new-age payments tools

➤ From 190 million transactions in April 2018, UPI saw 782 million transactions in April 2019

➤ SBI, ICICI Bank, HDFC Bank, and Axis Bank are

leading traditional banks in digital payments space

➤ PhonePe, Google Pay and Paytm are fuelling the growth of UPI, while banks have slowed down

➤ Paytm Payments Bank houses an e-wallet business and clocked 3.5 billion transactions in the previous year



- ❖ For the financial year ended March 2019, the target was of about 30 billion digital transactions. 90-95% of the target was met.



- ❖ Mobile wallets and the Unified Payments Interface (UPI) are considered as key instruments for the success of digital payments.

## **RTGS**

- ❖ To facilitate high-value fund transfers, the RBI has announced an extension of timings for customer transactions through “Real Time Gross Settlement (RTGS)”.
- ❖ From June 1, 2019 the transaction timings are extended by one and half hours - 4:30 PM to 06 PM.
- ❖ ‘Real Time’ means the processing of instructions at the time they are received.
- ❖ ‘Gross Settlement’ means that the settlement of funds transfer instructions occurs individually not in batches unlike NEFT.
- ❖ There is “No upper limit” on the value of funds that can be transferred via the RTGS system.

## **SC/ST Entrepreneurs**

- ❖ National Small Industries Corporation (NSIC) has signed a MOU with Ministry of MSME for the year 2019-20.
- ❖ The objective of the MoU is to provide assistance to SC/ST entrepreneurs with the overall objectives to increase their participation in public procurement.
- ❖ NSIC is a Government of India Enterprise under the Mini-Ratna Category.
- ❖ It was established in 1955.
- ❖ It functions under Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME).

## **IMD World Competitiveness Rankings 2019**

- ❖ India has moved up one place to rank 43rd most competitive economy in world in annual competitiveness rankings releases recently.
- ❖ The rankings are released by IMD - International Institute for Management Development.

India's Rank	Year
2019	43
2018	44
2017	45
2016	41



### IMD World Competitiveness ranking 2019 One Year Change

2019	Country	2018	Change
1	Singapore	3	+2 ↑
2	Hong Kong SAR	2	- -
3	USA	1	-2 ↓
4	Switzerland	5	+1 ↑
5	UAE	7	+2 ↑
6	Netherlands	4	-2 ↓
7	Ireland	12	+5 ↑
8	Denmark	6	-2 ↓
9	Sweden	9	- -
10	Qatar	14	+4 ↑

- ❖ The competitiveness chart was topped by Singapore
- ❖ It has pushed down Hong Kong and the United States to take the top spot among the world's most competitive economies.
- ❖ Venezuela has finished the list with the last rank.

### FDI inflow – India

- ❖ Based on latest data of the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT), Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in India declined for the first time in the last six years in 2018-19.
- ❖ The overseas fund inflows subsided in telecom, pharma and power sectors.
- ❖ Singapore replaced Mauritius as the top source of foreign investment with FDI inflows twice that from Mauritius.
- ❖ The other major investors in the country includes Japan, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom (UK), the United States (US), Germany, Cyprus, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and France.



## SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

### Shoebbox Satellites

- ❖ Engineers from a Chinese start-up called LinkSpace tested a 8-metres reusable rocket last week.
- ❖ Using this rocket they plan to send tiny, inexpensive shoebox satellites into space.
- ❖ They are called shoebox because of their size as they weigh less than 10 kg.
- ❖ Scientists expect high demand for such shoebox satellites.
- ❖ They can be used for services like high-speed internet for aircraft, tracking coal shipments, universities/schools conducting experiments.

### Tianhui II-01 satellites

- ❖ China launched two Tianhui II-01 satellites from Taiyuan Satellite Launch Centre, also known as Base 25.
- ❖ The purpose of the satellite is to perform scientific experiments, land resource and geographic survey, and mapping.
- ❖ The satellites were launched by a Long March 4B carrier rocket also known as Chang Zheng 4B.
- ❖ This was the 303<sup>rd</sup> successful mission of the Long March series carrier rocket.

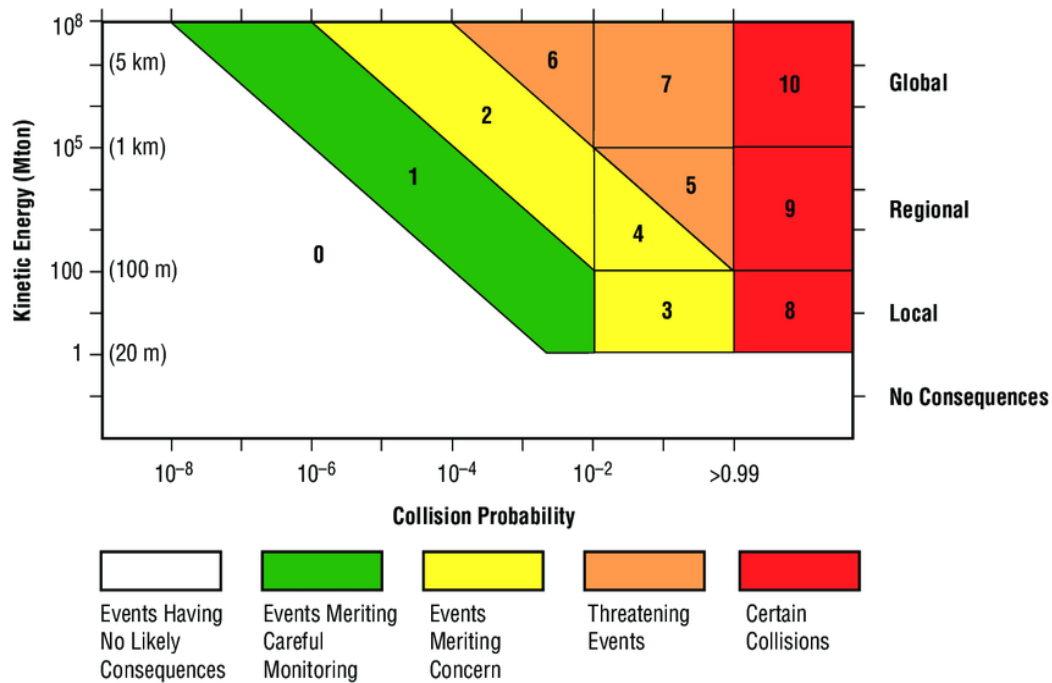
### 99942 Apophis Asteroid

- ❖ 99942 Apophis is one of about 2,000 currently known Potentially Hazardous Asteroids.
- ❖ It was discovered in 2004.
- ❖ It is a near earth object.
- ❖ Therefore, its orbit brings it near earth periodically.
- ❖ It has a probability of 2.7% to cruise by Earth on April 13, 2029.
- ❖ This probability has set record for the highest rating in Torino scale.

### Torino Scale

- ❖ Torino scale is a method for categorizing the impact hazard associated with near-Earth objects (NEOs) such as asteroids and comets.

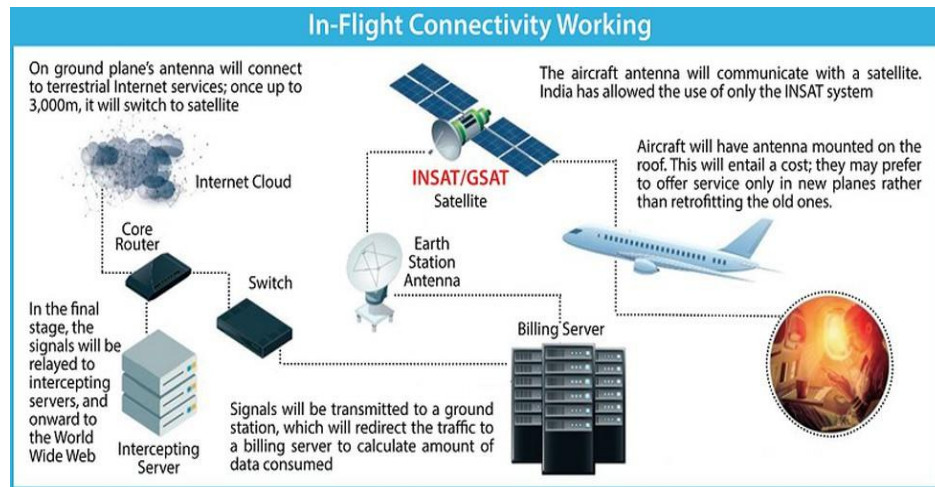




- ❖ It is on a scale of 0 to 10.
- ❖ More extraordinary events are indicated by a higher Torino Scale value.

### In-flight internet connectivity

- ❖ International airlines could start providing Internet onboard over Indian skies in the next three months.
- ❖ Domestic airlines will need additional time.
- ❖ Once aircraft reaches 3000m height it gets internet through geostationary satellites.
- ❖ These satellites beam signals directly on to the antenna of the airplane.
- ❖ Only INSAT satellite of India has been permitted for this purpose.
- ❖ The direct transmission of internet through satellites will be carried over
  - The Ku Band: 12-18 gigahertz (GHz)
  - The Ka band: 26-40GHz



## Aditya L1

- ❖ Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO) is planning to send a probe named Aditya L1 to study the sun early next year.
- ❖ This is India's first mission to study the sun.
- ❖ It will be inserted in an orbit around the Lagrangian point 1 (L1) of the Sun-Earth system.
- ❖ Only a satellite placed in L1 orbit can view sun continuously without any eclipses.

## ISRO's RISAT-2BR1

- ❖ ISRO is set to launch its Radar Imaging Satellite, the RISAT-2BR1 from Sriharikota in Andhra Pradesh.
- ❖ Its launch was earlier scheduled in 2020 after RISAT-2A but is now preponed.
- ❖ The RISAT, a remote sensing satellite, provide all-weather surveillance using synthetic aperture radars (SAR).
- ❖ RISATs are the first all-weather observation satellites from ISRO.
- ❖ It designed to provide a continuous view of earth either at day or night for the forces to detect border infiltration.
- ❖ The satellite will be launched using ISRO's own Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV) called PSLV-C46.
- ❖ ISRO is also planning to send its cartography satellite Cartosat-3 among other small defence satellites.

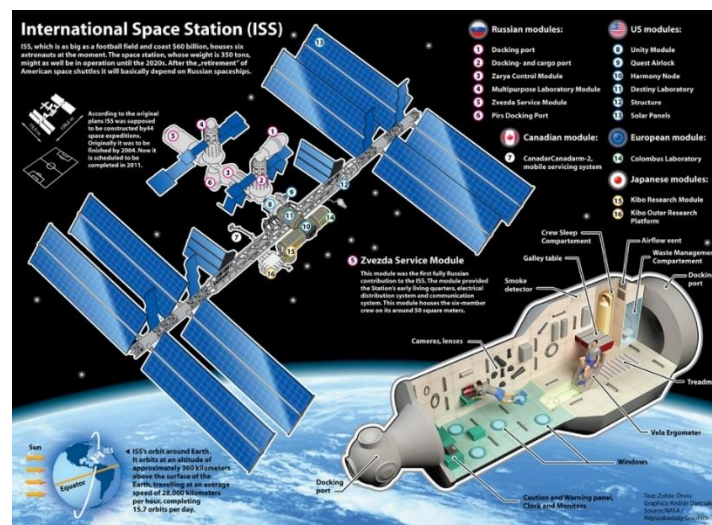
## About RISAT Series

- ❖ The RISAT series by ISRO are first all-weather earth observation satellites.

- ❖ These Radar imaging satellites are designed to all-weather surveillance using synthetic aperture radars (SAR)
- ❖ On 20 April 2009, RISAT-2 was deployed in orbit prior to RISAT- 1.
- ❖ RISAT-1 was successfully launched by PSLV-C19 on 26 April 2012 for a period of five years.
- ❖ It is first indigenous microwave remote sensing satellite designed and developed by ISRO.

### Cargo mission to ISS

- ❖ SpaceX successfully launched a Dragon spacecraft on a cargo mission for NASA to International Space Station (ISS).
- ❖ It was launched on a 'Falcon 9' rocket, from Cape Canaveral in Florida. It is being used for first time.
- ❖ It carries of research, supplies and hardware for astronauts living and working on ISS as part of the CRS-17 mission (17th resupply mission).
- ❖ It will remain at ISS for about four weeks before coming back to Earth with more than 1,900 kg of research and return cargo.



### Trans Fat

- ❖ The World Health Organisation has partnered with International Food and Beverage Alliance (IFBA) to eliminate Industrially produced trans fat.
- ❖ Food makers use artificial trans fat to enhance the flavour, texture, and shelf life of processed foods.
- ❖ In such products trans fat is listed as "partially hydrogenated oils."



- ❖ Hydrogenation solidifies liquid oils and thus increases the shelf life and the flavour stability of foods that contain them.
- ❖ For related news please go to News Dated 18.02.19.  
Link: <https://www.tnpscthervupettagam.com/awareness-of-trans-fatty-acids-tfa/>

### Harmful Effects

- ❖ Trans fat raises bad LDL (Low -density lipoproteins) cholesterol and lowers Good HDL Cholesterol.
- ❖ High LDL cholesterol results in Heart disease.
- ❖ Trans fat is responsible for over 5,00,000 deaths globally from coronary heart disease each year.

### **Arsenic Respiration**

- ❖ The scientist of the University of Washington discovered arsenic-breathing organisms in the surface of Pacific Ocean where oxygen is almost absent.
- ❖ Arsenic respiration was done during the evolution of the life on the earth.
- ❖ At that time there was scarce oxygen both in the air and in the ocean.
- ❖ Some biologists are of the opinion that these types of organisms are not new to the environment and exist from the inception of evolution.

### **Supernovas**

- ❖ Scientist at Tata Institute of Fundamental Research have theorised the reason for formation of supernova.
- ❖ They say that **fast neutrino oscillations** may be the reason why some stars explode.
- ❖ Explosion of a star results in Supernova.
- ❖ It is the largest explosion that takes place in space.

### Fast neutrino oscillations

- ❖ 3 types of neutrinos are electron neutrino, muon neutrino and tau neutrino.
- ❖ Neutrinos have a small mass and they can change from one flavour to another. This is called neutrino oscillation.
- ❖ Fast Neutrino oscillations happens when different kind of neutrons are emitted in slightly different directions.



### Japan's first private rocket

- ❖ Interstellar Technologies (IST) have become Japan's first private company who launched its own rocket momo-3 into space.
- ❖ Interstellar Technologies launched Momo-3 rocket successfully from Hokkaido space centre.
- ❖ Interstellar Technologies first tried to launch private launch vehicle Momo-1 in year 2017 but failed.
- ❖ Second attempt was made in year 2018 with Momo-2 but it was crashed just four seconds after its launch.
- ❖ This company is planning to build a full-scale rocket that can launch small satellites into orbit by 2020.

### First Vaccine for Dengue

- ❖ The Food and Drug Administration has approved the first vaccine for dengue, Dengvaxia.
- ❖ But it also put certain conditions that use dengue vaccine only in people who have a previous history of the disease.
- ❖ The vaccine is a live, attenuated dengue virus. Under the vaccination, 3 doses will be provided to the patient.
- ❖ The vaccine is also known as CYD-TDV and made by company Sanofi Pasteur.
- ❖ Mexico was the first country to clear it in the year 2015.

#### **DENGIVAXIA (DENGUE VACCINE)**

##### **How many times should an individual get vaccinated?**

- Given every 6 months.
- For Example if one gets the first dose in April, the person will receive his second dose 6 months after, which is October. The third dose will be given 6 months after the second dose which is April of the following year.

DOSES	MONTHS
1 <sup>st</sup> dose	0
2 <sup>nd</sup> dose	6
3 <sup>rd</sup> dose	12



### Manav Atlas

- ❖ The Department of Biotechnology (DBT) has launched a new project called 'MANAV: Human Atlas Initiative'.



- ❖ This is the first program to map every tissue of the human body.
- ❖ The project can be signed up by students with a background in bio-sciences who are in their final year of graduation and above.
- ❖ The atlas will have data about the human physiology in two stages - in a normal stage and a disease stage.
- ❖ Thus, the atlas can help in
  - tracing the causes of a disease
  - understanding specific pathways
  - decode the body's disease stage linked to tissues and cells.
- ❖ In addition to researchers and clinicians, the atlas will be of help to drug developers.

### **World's Smallest Pixels**

- ❖ According to the research published in the journal 'Science Advances' scientists have created the world's smallest pixels.
- ❖ These pixels are million times smaller than typical smartphone pixels.
- ❖ They can be seen in bright sunlight and are thus energy efficient.
- ❖ These pixels are made of tiny particle of gold (size - few billionths of a metre).
- ❖ These grains are stuck on reflective surface with thin sticky coating of **polyaniline**.
- ❖ This coating changes chemically when electrically switched, causing the pixel to display all colours across the spectrum.

### **Cost Effective Diagnosis**

- ❖ The National Institute of Immunohaematology, Mumbai has developed a cost-effective Point-of-Care (POC) rapid diagnostic test for
  - Severe Haemophilia A
  - Von Willebrand Disease (VWD).
- ❖ Patients with above 2 diseases can have life threatening spontaneous or post-traumatic bleeding like brain haemorrhage, gastrointestinal bleeding or bleeding from the nose or gums.
- ❖ According to Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) the cost of these testing kits is less than ₹50 while current kits cost around ₹4,000 to ₹10,000.





### VWD

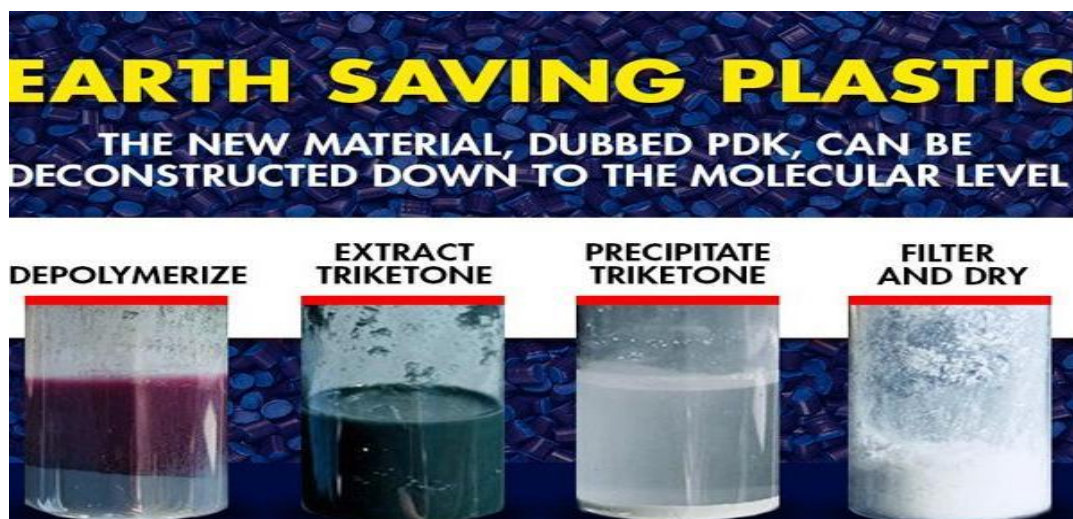
- ❖ It is a genetic disorder caused by missing or defective Von Willebrand factor (VWF).
- ❖ VWF is a blood-clotting protein.
- ❖ When bleeding occurs the VWF helps **blood platelets** to mesh together and form a clot to stop the bleeding.
- ❖ People with disorder do not have enough VW Factor.
- ❖ So, it takes longer for the blood to clot and for bleeding to stop.

### **New Gen Plastic**

- ❖ A team of US scientists from Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory have created new generation recyclable plastic.
- ❖ It is named as Poly Diketoenamine or PDK Plastic.
- ❖ It can be fully recycled into new materials of any colour, shape, or form, without loss of performance or quality.

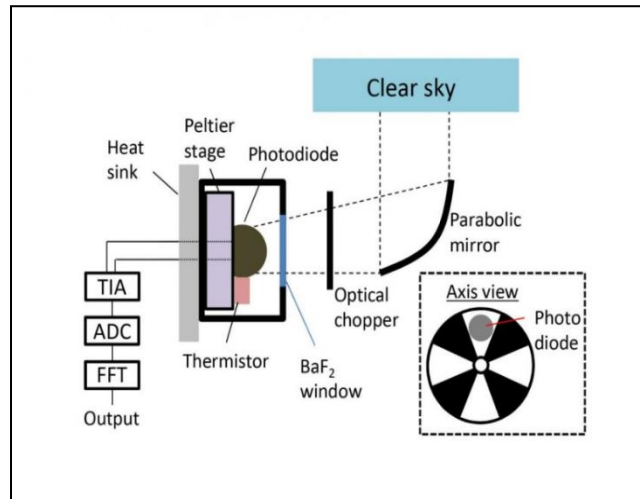
### How is it different?

- ❖ Conventional plastic is made up of polymers.
- ❖ Polymers are composed of repeating units of shorter carbon-containing compounds called monomers.
- ❖ Additional chemicals added to these monomers creates unbreakable bond.
- ❖ Even the most recyclable plastic, PET (polyethylene terephthalate) is only recycled at a rate of 20-30 per cent.
- ❖ But the monomers in PDK plastic can be fully separated from compounded additives by dunking the material in a highly acidic solution.



## Electricity from coldness of the universe

- ❖ Scientists from Stanford University have demonstrated for the first time that it is possible to produce a measurable amount of electricity in an infrared photodiode from the coldness of the universe.
- ❖ The infrared semiconductor uses the temperature difference between Space and Earth to produce the electricity.
- ❖ The new device has generated about 64 nanowatts per square meter.



## World's 1<sup>st</sup> parent-wise genome

- ❖ The National Dairy Development Board (NDDB) has developed world's first complete parent-wise genome assembly called "NDDB ABRO Murrah" of riverine buffaloes.
- ❖ This comes on the back of successful launch of INDUSCHIP, a customized genotyping chip for indigenous cattle and their crosses.
- ❖ To ensure better accuracy, for the first time a trio binning was used for separating haplotypes of a buffalo, using a father-mother-offspring trio.

## Mega Missions

- ❖ The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) recently announced that it has planned seven mega missions, including Chandrayaan-2.
- ❖ These will be conducted over a period of next 10 years.
- ❖ It has also prepared a roadmap for next 30 years.
- ❖ The missions planned are



Mission	Object of Study
Chandrayaan 2	Moon
Mangalyaan – 2	Mars
Aditya -L1	Sun
Venus Mission	Venus
Lunar Polar Exploration	Moon
XPOsAT	Cosmic Radiation
Exoworlds	Exploration outside the solar system

- ❖ ISRO has defined only 3 Missions – Chandrayaan-2, XPOsAT and Aditya-L1.
- ❖ The rest of them are undefined missions and in planning stage.

### **Ultima Thule**

- ❖ NASA has found evidence of a unique mixture of water ice, methanol, and organic molecules on Ultima Thule's surface.
- ❖ This mixture is very different from most icy objects explored previously by spacecraft till date.
- ❖ Ultima Thule is a Greco-Latin term which means a distant unknown world.
- ❖ Its scientific name is 2014 MU 69.
- ❖ It was discovered in 2014 by Marc Buie using Hubble Space Telescope as a part of the ongoing New Horizons Mission.
- ❖ It is a trans Neptunian object located in Kuiper belt.
- ❖ The New Horizon Mission was launched in 2006 to search for Kuiper Belt objects.

### **Kuiper Belt**

- ❖ Kuiper belt is a circumstellar disc in outer Solar System.
- ❖ It is approximately 6.4 billion km from Earth.
- ❖ It is the farthest world ever explored by mankind.
- ❖ The Kuiper belt is home to three officially recognized dwarf planets
  - Pluto
  - Haumea
  - Makemake
- ❖ Originally considered a planet, Pluto's status as part of the Kuiper belt caused it to be reclassified as a dwarf planet in 2006.



- ❖ The objects within the Kuiper belt are referred to as trans-Neptunian objects (TNOs).

### **Woman on Moon**

- ❖ NASA has unveiled the calendar for the "Artemis" program.
- ❖ This program aims to take astronauts back to the Moon and specifically land a first female astronaut on lunar soil.
- ❖ Apollo lunar mission was named after Greek God Apollo.
- ❖ Artemis is the twin sister of Apollo in Greek mythology.
- ❖ Artemis series of launches planned are

Artemis 1	2020	an unmanned mission around the Moon
Artemis 2	2022	Manned mission orbiting around moon
Artemis 3	2024	Land astronauts on moon, including the first woman

- ❖ These three will be launched into space by the biggest rocket of all time, the Boeing-led Space Launch System (SLS).
- ❖ In addition to these, the mission will also carry the building blocks of the lunar mini-station "Gateway".
- ❖ These launches will be done by private space companies.

### **Ancient Ice age**

- ❖ Researchers from the University of Chicago have discovered the remnants of seawater dating back to the Ice Age.
- ❖ The discovery was made while exploring the limestone deposits that form the Maldives.
- ❖ The exploration was conducted from Joint Oceanographic Institutions for Deep Earth Sampling (JOIDES) ship.
- ❖ It drills into the ocean floor to collect and study core samples.
- ❖ Scientists use this data for better understanding of climate change, geology and Earth's history.



## **Anthropocene Age**

- ❖ A 34-member panel of the Anthropocene Working Group (AWG) has voted 29-4 in favour of designating a new geological epoch, the Anthropocene epoch.
- ❖ This marks the end of the Holocene Epoch, which began 11,700 years ago.
- ❖ The term 'Anthropocene' was coined in 2000 by Nobel Laureate Paul Crutzen and Eugene Stoermer.
- ❖ Anthropocene epoch denotes the present geological time interval in which human activity has deeply altered many conditions and processes on Earth.
- ❖ Scientists are looking for the "Golden spike" which initiated Anthropocene epoch.
- ❖ Golden spike is a global level geological marker which triggers the new epoch.
- ❖ Example: Artificial radionuclides spread across the world by atomic bomb tests from the early 1950s.

### **Official bodies involved**

- ❖ This proposal will be sent to the International Commission on Stratigraphy which oversees the official Geological time chart.
- ❖ The final ratification will be made by the International Union of Geological Sciences.

## **ENVIRONMENT**

### **Chickpea genetic diversity**

- ❖ A global team of scientists has unlocked the genetic diversity of chickpea (*Cicer arietinum*).
- ❖ India's International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT) and China's BGI-Shenzhen have collaborated in this project.
- ❖ The team completed the genome sequencing of 429 lines of chickpeas, including 176 from India.
- ❖ The project aims to create newer varieties of chickpea with following traits
  - Higher yields
  - Disease and pest resistance
  - Climate change resistance
- ❖ Chickpea is the world's second most widely grown legume.



## Everest's Garbage

- ❖ Nepal has launched a 45-day Everest Cleaning Campaign.
- ❖ It has collected about 3,000 kilograms of solid waste from Mt. Everest.
- ❖ The campaign concludes on May 29.
- ❖ The first summit of Everest by Edmund Hillary and Tenzing Norgay in 1953 is commemorated every year on May 29.

## Media and Climate change

- ❖ 5th Asia Pacific Broadcasting Union (ABU) Media Summit on Climate Action and Disaster Preparedness was conducted in Kathmandu.
- ❖ The theme of the two-day summit is “Media Solutions for Sustainable Future: Saving Lives, Building Resilient Communities”.
- ❖ The summit aims to
  - Utilize media's potential of accelerating climate action and disaster preparedness
  - Connect stakeholders to media professionals for collaboration and joint practical projects.
- ❖ ABU was founded in 1964. Its secretariat is at Kuala Lumpur.



### 5TH ABU MEDIA SUMMIT ON CLIMATE ACTION AND DISASTER PREPAREDNESS

**Media Solutions for Sustainable Future -  
Saving Lives, Building Resilient Communities**

25-26 April 2019 | Kathmandu, Nepal

## Drying North East India

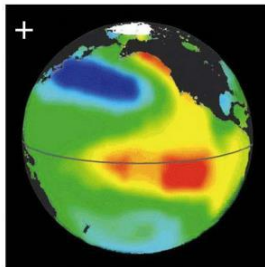
- ❖ North East India is one of the wettest places in India.
- ❖ But it is drying rapidly in the last 30 years.
- ❖ Researchers from the Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology, Pune, and Assam University studied the reason for this phenomenon.



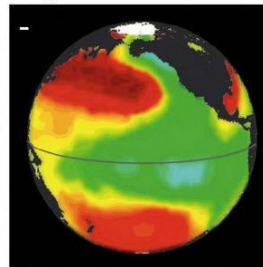
- ❖ They state that the decreasing monsoon rainfall is associated with natural changes in the subtropical Pacific Ocean.

### Pacific Decadal Oscillation (PDO)

~15 to 30 year cycle



**Positive PDO pattern**

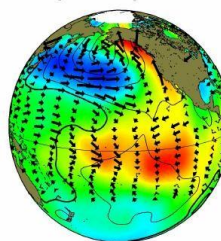


**Negative PDO pattern**

- The PDO Index is a spatial average of monthly sea surface temperature (SST) anomaly of the Pacific Ocean north of 20° N. The global average anomaly is subtracted to account for global warming (Mantua, 2000).
- Highly correlated with temperature in California Current

### Pacific Decadal Oscillation

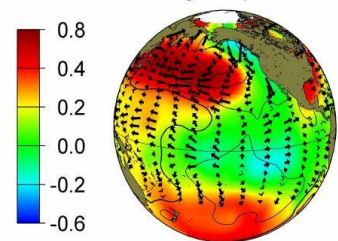
**WARM or positive phase**



**1) COLD water in central Pacific supports trough over central Pacific**

**2) WARM water along the West coast supports RIDGE over West Coast of N.America**

**COLD or negative phase**



**1) WARM water in central Pacific supports RIDGE over central Pacific and strong PACIFIC JET**

**2) COOL water along the West coast supports TROUGH over West Coast of N.America & MILD eastern US winters**

### Pacific decadal oscillation (PDO)

- ❖ PDO is a pattern of fluctuations in the ocean – specifically in north Pacific basin.
- ❖ It affects northeast Indian summer monsoon.
- ❖ PDO is an oceanic phenomenon like EL Nino, La Nina
- ❖ But its impact is felt on a decadal level.

### **Bajirao**

- ❖ The last captive white tiger named Bajirao died recently at Sanjay Gandhi National Park, Mumbai.
- ❖ White Tigers are not a separate sub-species of tiger.
- ❖ These tigers are white because of
  - lack of red or yellow 'pheomelanin' pigment
  - presence of unique recessive genes.
- ❖ Now there are no white tigers in the natural habitat.



- ❖ The last white tiger reported in wild was captured in Rewa forest in Madhya Pradesh.

### **Sanjay Gandhi National Park**

- ❖ It is notable as one of the major national parks existing within a metropolis limit of Mumbai.
- ❖ The park also has the 2400-year-old Kanheri caves sculpted out of the rocky cliffs.
- ❖ This site was an important Buddhist learning centre.

### **Biodiversity Report**

- ❖ The global scientific body 'Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services' (IPBES) has released a comprehensive report on the world's ecological destruction.
- ❖ It states that human activity is threatening the existence of over a million plant and animal species.
- ❖ 75% of Earth's land surface and 66% marine environments have been "significantly altered" and that "over 85%" of wetland area had been lost.
- ❖ IBPES is an independent intergovernmental body, established by UN member states in 2012.
- ❖ It is headquartered in Bonn, Germany.
- ❖ The objectives of IPBES are
  - to strengthen the science-policy interface for biodiversity and ecosystem conservation
  - sustainable use of biodiversity
  - long-term human well-being
  - sustainable development.

### **New Pit Viper**

- ❖ A team of herpetologists led by Ashok Captain have described a new species of reddish-brown pit viper.
- ❖ They discovered it in the forests of West Kameng district of Arunachal Pradesh.
- ❖ It is named *Trimeresurus arunachalensis*.



- ❖ Arunachal Pradesh becomes the only Indian state to have a pit viper named after it.
- ❖ India had four brown pit vipers before the Arunachal Pradesh discovery.
- ❖ Herpetology is the branch of zoology concerned with reptiles and amphibians.

### Asiatic Lion

- ❖ For the first time the entire genome of Asiatic lion has been sequenced by scientists of CSIR-Centre for Cellular and Molecular Biology, Hyderabad.
- ❖ This would enable scientists in better understanding the evolution of Asiatic lions and better management of the species.
- ❖ The striking feature in Asiatic lions is a longitudinal fold of skin running along its belly. It is absent in African lion.
- ❖ Gir National Park and Wildlife Sanctuary is the only abode of the Asiatic lion.

#### Fact Box

Common Name: Asiatic Lion, Indian Lion

Scientific Name: *Panthera Leo persica*

#### Status:

Listed in Schedule I of Wildlife (Protection) Act 1972,

Listed in Appendix I of CITES

Endangered in IUCN List

#### Threats:

Vulnerable to extinction from unpredictable events, such as an epidemic or large forest fire.

### Reappearance of brown bear

- ❖ The first brown bear sighting in Portugal in more than a century was confirmed by wildlife experts.
- ❖ The bear is most likely belonging to a population living in the western Cantabrian Mountains in northern Spain.
- ❖ Brown bears have been extinct in Portugal since the 19th century.
- ❖ The animal was spotted in the Montesinho Natural Park and Braganca commune in northeastern Portugal.



### **Conference of the Parties**

- ❖ Various session of the following convention's Conference of the Parties (COP) was held In Geneva International Conference Centre, Switzerland.
  - 14<sup>th</sup> meeting of the COP to the Basel Convention (BC COP-14),
  - 9<sup>th</sup> meeting of the COP to the Rotterdam Convention (RC COP-9)
  - 9<sup>th</sup> meeting of the COP to the Stockholm Convention (SC COP-9).
- ❖ The theme of the meeting was "Clean Planet, Healthy People: Sound Management of Chemicals and Waste".
- ❖ In the meeting, 187 countries pledge to restrict the global plastic waste but United States has refused to take part in this pledge.
- ❖ COP-14 has discussed among parties about matters related to implementation of the Convention which include the strategic framework entry into force of the Ban Amendment and the Cartagena Declaration on the Prevention, Minimization and Recovery of Hazardous Wastes and other wastes.

### **Basel Conventions**

- ❖ It is also known as the Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and Their Disposal.
- ❖ This international treaty aims to reduce the movements of hazardous waste between nations and specifically to prevent transfer of hazardous waste from developed to less developed countries (LDCs).

### **Rotterdam Convention**

- ❖ It is also known as the Rotterdam Convention on the Prior Informed Consent Procedure for Certain Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides in International Trade.

- ❖ It aims to promote shared responsibilities and cooperative efforts among parties in the international trade of certain hazardous chemicals in order to protect human health and the environment from potential harm and also contribute to environmentally sound use of these chemicals.

### Stockholm Convention

- ❖ It is also known as the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants.
- ❖ This international treaty aims to eliminate or restrict the production and use of persistent organic pollutants (POPs).

### **Bioremediation**

- ❖ Scientists of CSIR-National Botanical Research Institute (CSIR-NBRI) and the University of Lucknow have used 2 indigenous strains of bacterium to remove arsenic contamination in soil.
- ❖ The strains are named as *Bacillus flexus* and *Acinetobacter junii*.
- ❖ They can live symbiotically in the roots of plants in arsenic contaminated soils and help them uptake the required nutrients without causing toxicity.
- ❖ In addition, they also promote plant growth.
- ❖ Bioremediation uses mainly microorganisms, plants, or microbial or plant enzymes to detoxify contaminants in the soil and other environments.

### **Back from the Dead - Twice**

- ❖ The bird **Aldabra white-throated rail** has rebirthed itself twice after going extinct some 1,36,000 years ago.
- ❖ Scientists have termed it **iterative evolution**.
- ❖ It means the repeated evolution of similar or parallel structures from the same ancestor, but at different times.





- ❖ It is a chicken sized flightless bird that lives in Indian ocean's Aldabra atoll.
- ❖ It is indigenous to Madagascar but the fossil of the bird was found in distant Aldabra atoll during
  - two different time periods
  - each separated by many thousands of years.
- ❖ The unique and oldest paleontological record of Aldabra combines with fossil evidence, demonstrates the effects of changing sea levels on extinction and recolonization events.

### Death of Domestic Yaks

- ❖ At least 300 yaks (*Bos grunniens*) have starved to death in the Mukuthang valley in Sikkim after getting trapped by heavy snowfall.
- ❖ While between 10 and 15 yaks usually die each year this year's toll is the highest on record.
- ❖ Yaks are a source of local milk, milk products, transportation and wool in the Himalayan region, Tibetan plateau and as far as Mongolia.

### Rain Loving Snake

- ❖ A 7- member team of herpetologists have documented a new species of non-venomous snake in Mizoram.
- ❖ It has been named **Smithophis atemporalis**. It is a predominantly aquatic species.
- ❖ It is named after the British herpetologist Malcolm Arthur Smith for his immense contribution to Indian herpetology.
- ❖ Locally it is known as **Ruahlawmrul** or rain-loving snake.
- ❖ Snakes discovered from North East recently:

Mizoram	Smithophis atemporalis	Non-Venomous
Arunachal Pradesh	Crying Keelback	Non-Venomous
Arunachal Pradesh	Reddish-brown pit viper	Venomous

### Sendai Framework

- ❖ A Global Assessment Report (GAR) was launched by the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR).





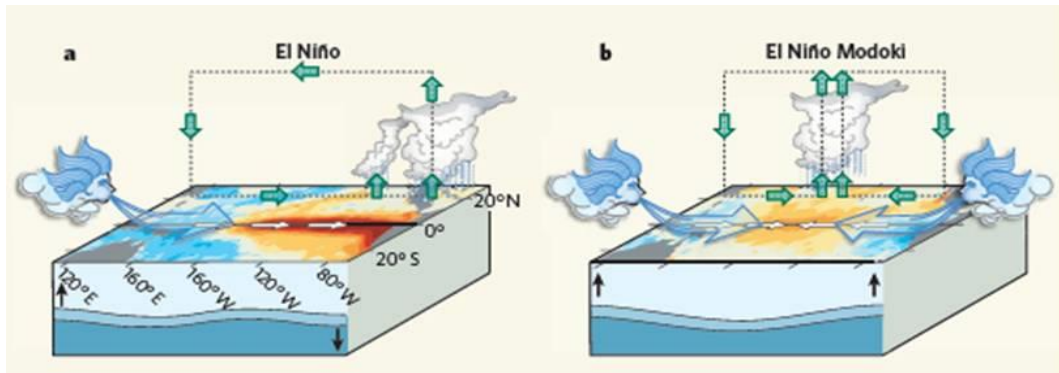
- ❖ It has warned of new and larger threats due to **extreme climate changes** with specific reference to Asia Pacific economies.
- ❖ The report has outlined major risk to human life from
  - air pollution
  - biological hazards
  - natural disasters like floods, landslides and earthquakes
- ❖ It projects economic losses to the extent of 4% of GDP annually if countries don't invest in Disaster Risk Reduction.
- ❖ The GAR report urges to put **Sendai Framework** into immediate action.

#### What is it?

- ❖ It was adopted by UN member states in 2015.
- ❖ It talks about reducing disaster mortalities and economic losses.
- ❖ It aims to strengthen **risk governance** by investing in early warning system.

#### **El Nino Modoki**

- ❖ The Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology (IITM) has predicted that El Nino Modoki events in India from 2020 may
  - increase the frequency of heat waves
  - increase the duration of heat waves
- ❖ South India and coastal regions are expected to be affected by more heat waves.
- ❖ Heat waves in India are usually followed by El Nino events.
- ❖ El Nino is warming of Eastern Pacific Ocean.
- ❖ But El Nino Modoki event is the Warming up of central Pacific Ocean.
- ❖ It is the first time that a research has connected future heat waves in India with El Nino Modoki events.
- ❖ Additional factors expected to make the heat waves worse are
  - Depletion of soil moisture
  - transfer of heat from the earth to the atmosphere

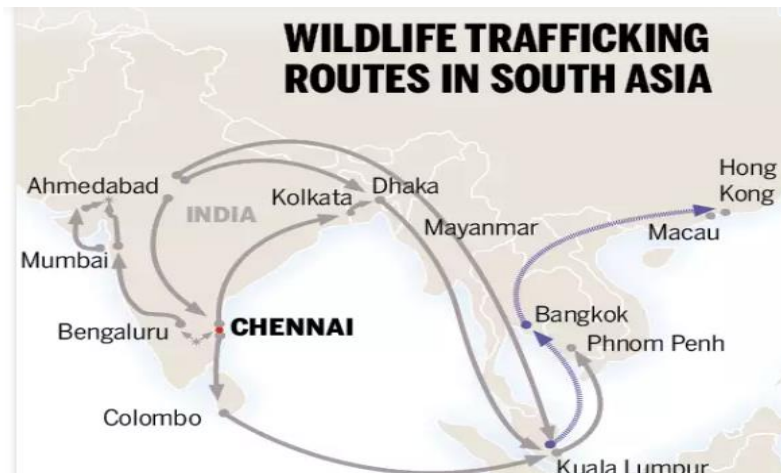


## Illegal Animal Trade

- ❖ In connection with the International Day of Biological Diversity (May 22) an awareness campaign has been launched in India by
  - UN Environment India
  - Wildlife Crime Control Bureau (WCCB) of India
- ❖ The tagline 'Not all animals migrate by choice' will be displayed at major airports across India.
- ❖ The campaign aims to raise awareness on illegal wildlife trade.

### Chennai Airport

- ❖ According to animal conservation organisation TRAFFIC (Trade Records Analysis of Flora and Fauna in Commerce-India) Chennai is becoming the hub of illegal animal trade in South Asia and South East Asia.
- ❖ Star Tortoise, red-eared slider, pangolin, shark fins are the most smuggled animals from Chennai.
- ❖ Most of the animals smuggled out of Chennai are used in preparation traditional medicines in South-East Asia and China. Ex: shark fins





❖ Recent seizures at Chennai airport

Date	Animal Caught
March 25, 2019	African horn pit viper seized along with 2 rhinoceros iguanas, 3 rock iguanas, 22 Egyptian tortoises, 4 blue-tongued skinks and 3 green tree frogs
February 2, 2019	Leopard cub seized from a man who arrived from Bangkok
December 20, 2018	4,800 red-eared slider turtles seized from two passengers who arrived from Bangkok
April 6, 2018	65 star tortoises seized from a passenger bound for Bangkok

### Environmental Carbon dioxide

- ❖ On May 11, global concentration of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere crossed the 415 parts per million (ppm) mark for the first time.
- ❖ It was measured by sensors at the Mauna Loa observatory in Hawaii.
- ❖ In 1958 the carbon dioxide concentrations were around 315 ppm at the same place.
- ❖ The rapidly rising concentration of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere is one of the best indicators of global warming.

#### Why is it dangerous?

- ❖ Carbon dioxide has a very long lifespan in the atmosphere, between 100 and 300 years.
- ❖ The carbon dioxide concentration level corresponding to a 2°C rise in global temperatures is generally understood to be 450 ppm.
- ❖ At current rates of growth this level would be reached in less than 12 years (by 2030 itself)

### Traffic Pollution

- ❖ A study has found that exposure to Traffic-Related Air Pollution (TRAP) can alter brain chemicals in children.
- ❖ It may increase the risk of mental disorders such as anxiety and depression.
- ❖ Traffic-related air pollution contributes significantly to outdoor air pollution, especially in urban settings.

- ❖ Researchers from the University of Cincinnati in the U.S. checked for the levels of “myo-inositol” found in the brain of 145 children (average age 12 years).
- ❖ Myo-inositol is a naturally-occurring metabolite mainly found in specialised brain cells known as “glial cells”.
- ❖ They are responsible for
  - Maintaining cell volume and fluid balance in the brain
  - Regulating the hormones and insulin in the body.
- ❖ The research evidence suggested that central nervous system is particularly vulnerable to air pollution.

### **Traffic Jam @ Thirty Thousand Feet**

- ❖ Overcrowding or “traffic jam” has killed 11 people including 3 Indians in a span of ten days while trying to scale Mount Everest.
- ❖ The deaths were due to altitude sickness, long waiting hours in a place with scarce oxygen, long queues in a hostile terrain and frostbites.
- ❖ Indiscriminate permits issued by Nepali government is blamed for these deaths.

### **Binny – India’s Orangutan**

- ❖ Binny is India’s only orangutan
- ❖ It passed away at the age of 41 in Odisha’s Nandankanan Zoological Park.
- ❖ The ape was brought to the Odisha zoo, when she was 25 years old, from the Rajiv Gandhi Zoological Park in Pune.





- ❖ Orangutans are one of the world's three extant species of great apes.
- ❖ They are native to Indonesia and Malaysia and at present are found only in the rainforests of Borneo and Sumatra.
- ❖ Major great apes are,
  - Chimpanzees
  - Gorillas
  - Orangutans

### Nandankanan Zoological Park

- ❖ Nandankanan Zoological Park is a zoo and botanical garden located in Bhubaneswar, Odisha.
- ❖ It was Established in 1960
- ❖ It became the first zoo in India to join World Association of Zoos and Aquariums (WAZA) in 2009.
- ❖ Kanjia lake is a part of Nandankanan Zoological Park.

## STATES

### Stucco Sculptures

- ❖ Archaeologists have excavated a rare life-size stucco Buddhist sculpture in Phanigiri, Telangana.
- ❖ It is about 1.73 m in height and 35 cm in width.
- ❖ The figurine represents one of the Bodhisattvas belonging to the Jathaka Chakra.
- ❖ It is also one of the largest Buddhist stucco sculptures unearthed in India till date.
- ❖ Other artefacts discovered are

A Mahastupa	It's a paribhogika stupa containing the personal belongings of Buddhist monks
Votive stupas	hemispherical structure containing relics of Buddhist monks
Apsidal Chaitya grihas	A prayer hall
Pillared congregation halls	Belongs to the 1 century BC Satavahana period



### Charminar damaged

- ❖ A portion of the Charminar damaged recently in Hyderabad.
- ❖ A portion of the ornamental stucco work of one the 4 minars has fallen off.
- ❖ The Charminar was built in 1591 by Mohammed Quli Qutb Shah.
- ❖ He built it as the foundation of the Hyderabad.
- ❖ He was the fourth king of the Qutb Shahi dynasty.
- ❖ He also built the Golconda fort.

### Puducherry - Delhi

- ❖ The Madras High Court has said that the Administrator / Lieutenant Governor has no powers to interfere or act independently in Puducherry government.
- ❖ Article 239AA of the constitution imposes several restrictions on the legislature of Delhi.
- ❖ Thus, the elected Delhi legislature has no power over law and order and land matters.
- ❖ But Article 239A does not impose any such explicit restrictions on Puducherry legislature.

#### Section 44 of the Government of Union Territories Act, 1963

There shall be a Council of Ministers in each UT to aid and advice the Administrator who shall act in his/her discretion "only" in so far as any "special responsibilities" were concerned.

- ❖ But this act does not mention any special responsibilities for the Administrator of the Union Territory.

### Heavy School Bags

- ❖ Karnataka has introduced norms to protect school kids from the health hazards of lugging heavy school bags.
- ❖ Schools are instructed to ensure bag's weight is not more than 10% of that of the child.
- ❖ Bags of students of Class I and II can only weigh around 1.5kg to 2kg.
- ❖ Those of Class III, IV and V can weigh 2kg to 3kg.
- ❖ Schools must also observe every 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday of the month as 'Bagless Day'.





### **Rani Abbakka Force**

- ❖ Mangaluru Police Commissioner Sandeep Patil flagged off the all-women police patrol unit named 'Rani Abbakka Force' in the city.
- ❖ It aims to handle issues pertaining to Women and Children.
- ❖ The Force has been named after the 16th-century warrior of coastal Karnataka, Queen Abbakka of Ullal near Mangaluru, who fought the Portuguese in the 16<sup>th</sup> century.

### **Lift Irrigation**

- ❖ Bharat Heavy Electricals Limited (BHEL) has successfully commissioned the Kaleshwaram Lift Irrigation Project in Telangana.
- ❖ In lift irrigation, water is not transported by natural flow but is lifted with pumps or surge pools etc.
- ❖ This water will be used for irrigation.
- ❖ 89 cumecs (cubic metres per second) of water will be lifted to a height of 106 metres from the Sripada Yellampalli reservoir to Medaram reservoir.

### **Zero Pendency Courts**

- ❖ Zero pendency courts are a pilot project undertaken in the subordinate courts of Delhi.
- ❖ The project aims to study the 'life cycle of cases' to come up with optimal timelines for cases.

### **Key Findings**

- ❖ Judicial delays cost India around 1.5% of its GDP.
- ❖ Delhi needs 43 more judges to clear all the pending cases in one year. Present strength is 143.

### **Char Dham Yatra**

- ❖ The world renowned chardham yatra has begun in Uttarakhand.
- ❖ Hindu pilgrims take this trip.
- ❖ In the great Himalayas in Uttarakhand the four pilgrim-destinations are collectively known as Chardham.
- ❖ They are



Place	Dedicated to
Yamunotri	Goddess Yamuna
Gangotri	Goddess Ganga
Kedarnath	Lord Shiva
Badrinath	Lord Vishnu

## Social Justice

- ❖ The Supreme Court upheld Karnataka government's 2018 law which provided for reservation in promotion and seniority to SC and ST employees.
- ❖ The Constitution bench ruled that providing the reservation
  - Would not affect the efficiency of administration
  - Not at odds with the principle of meritocracy.
- ❖ Karnataka became the first state to establish backwardness and inadequacy of representation of SC/ST employees with quantifiable data.
- ❖ It appointed a committee under Chief Secretary in 2017 which collected, collated and analysed relevant data of SC and ST employees in service.
- ❖ In the past 32 years, only 10.65% SC and 2.92% ST employees served in Karnataka state civil services.

## Unique Women Groups

- ❖ Odisha has devised a special project named **Swayamsiddha**.
- ❖ Under this project Odisha's Ganjam district administration will train Women self help groups (WSHG) in disaster management.
- ❖ These women will be trained in evacuation, rescue, restoration and rehabilitation during natural calamities, especially during cyclones.
- ❖ A control room of 'swayamsiddha' will operate at district headquarters Chatrapur.
- ❖ The Kerala government had earlier used WSHGs successfully in rehabilitation and restoration work in the 2018 floods.

## Chilika Lake

- ❖ The extremely severe cyclone Fani has created **four new mouths** in Chilika Lake.
- ❖ Earlier the lake had only 2 active mouths meeting with the Bay of Bengal.



- ❖ A river mouth is the point where it meets the sea.
- ❖ Chilika is Asia's largest brackish water lake.
- ❖ Chilika lagoon is the largest coastal lagoon in India.
- ❖ The largest lagoon in the world is the New Caledonian barrier reef in Australia.

### **Herbivores Census**

- ❖ The forest department of Gujarat is conducting a census of herbivores in Gir forest and other protected areas.
- ❖ The census covers wild ungulates like spotted deer, blue bulls (nilgais), sambars, Indian langurs, peafowl, Indian gazelles (chinkaras), four-horned antelopes (choshinga) and wild boars.
- ❖ Wild ungulates and langurs are the main prey of Asiatic lions.
- ❖ A count of ungulates gives data of prey-base for the lions and other predators like leopard, hyena.

### **Election Violence**

- ❖ In an unprecedented move, Election Commission (EC) has cancelled campaigning for the 7<sup>th</sup> and final phase of polls in 9 constituencies of West Bengal after 10 PM, Thursday (16.05.19).
- ❖ The mandatory 48 hours silence period before polling was supposed to start from 17.05.19 only.
- ❖ The EC has invoked powers under Article 324 of the Constitution.
- ❖ This article gives EC the powers of "superintendence, direction and the control of elections".
- ❖ EC aims to curb poll-related violence among political parties by such a measure.
- ❖ Other instances of use of Article 324 by EC in this 2019 elections:  
<https://www.tnpscthervupettagam.com/article-324/>

### **No Onion No Garlic No Egg**

- ❖ Karnataka government has contracted the Akshaya Pathra foundation to provide nutritious mid-day meals to school children.
- ❖ The foundation has avoided egg, onion and garlic in food on Hindu religious grounds.



- ❖ The National Institute of Nutrition (NIN) has submitted a report to government favouring the organisation.
- ❖ Activists are against the report and the poor-quality nutritious food provided to children.

### About NIN

- ❖ NIN was founded by Sir Robert McCarrison in the year 1918 at the Pasteur Institute, Coonoor.
- ❖ NIN is recognized for its pioneering studies on various aspects of nutrition research, with special reference to protein energy malnutrition (PEM).
- ❖ It was shifted to Hyderabad in 1958.

### **Arunachal Pradesh - Pakke**

- ❖ Researchers from Mysore carried out a study about Hornbills in Pakke Tiger Reserve in Arunachal Pradesh.
- ❖ They noted that hornbills are the
  - top seed dispersers
  - large-sized frugivores (fruit eating birds)
- ❖ Plants depend on frugivore birds to disperse the seeds and for further spread of the area.
- ❖ Any decline of frugivores could severely affect the ecosystem.

#### **Hornbill Fact Box**

Scientific Name: *Buceros bicornis*

Location: Himalayan foothills, hill forests in northeast India and wet evergreen forests of west India.

IUCN Status: Near Threatened

Listed in Appendix I of CITES

Threats: Killed widely to make Traditional Hats called Bopia Hat

State Bird of Kerala and Arunachal Pradesh (ONLY)

Every year Great Hornbill festival celebrated in Nagaland.





## Assam Crisis

- ❖ The Supreme Court has declared that the Foreigners Tribunal's order declaring a person as an illegal foreigner will be binding.
- ❖ It will also prevail over the Assam government's decision to exclude or include the person's name from the National Register of Citizens (NRC) in Assam.
- ❖ There are 100 foreigners' tribunals functioning in Assam as per the Government of Assam website.
- ❖ Judges and advocates are appointed as the members of the Foreigner's Tribunal under
  - The Foreigners Tribunal Act, 1941
  - The Foreigners Tribunal Order, 1964.
- ❖ The Supreme Court also ruled that the order of Foreigner's Tribunal will prevail over NRC as it was a quasi-judicial entity.
- ❖ The National Register of Citizens, or NRC, is the list of Indian citizens in Assam.
- ❖ It is being updated to weed out illegal immigration from Bangladesh and neighbouring regions.

## Andhra Bulls

- ❖ The Vice-President of India released a compendium on Ongole bulls in Andhra Pradesh during a private function.
- ❖ He stressed on the need to protect the globally famous Ongole bulls.
- ❖ They are an indigenous cattle breed that originate from Prakasam District, Andhra Pradesh.
- ❖ The Ongole breed of cattle (*Bos indicus*) are said to possess resistance to both
  - foot and mouth disease
  - mad cow disease.
- ❖ Fact sheet of Ongole breed

### Global Prominence of Ongole Breed

Zebu - Brazil imported barely hundred Ongole breed from India and produced multiple superior breeds like the world-famous Zebu bulls.

Brahmana bull - Famous in America, it is an off-breed of the Ongole.

Santa Gertrudis - Famous breed developed in Texas, USA have Ongole blood

Bull Fights - Used in Mexico and some parts of East Africa due to their strength and aggressiveness.



## **Zeliangrong Tribe**

- ❖ The Scientists are attempting to document an indigenous medicinal knowledge of Zeliangrong ethnic group in Manipur who have discovered new plants.
- ❖ The medicinal or pharmacology properties of these plants are not known previously.
- ❖ Some of them are Gynura cusimbua, Hedyotis scandens, Mussaenda glabra and Schima wallichii.
- ❖ Some rare and vulnerable species like “Piper arunachalensis” are also used by them to make traditional medicines.
- ❖ Zeliangrong ethnic group is one of the 32 tribes in Manipur, living in the Tamenglong district.
- ❖ It comprises of three groups which are collectively known as Zeliangrong
  - Zeme
  - Liangmai
  - Rongmei

## **Chandrani Murmu**

- ❖ A woman of tribal community, Chandrani Murmu has made history after winning the Lok Sabha seat from Keonjhar in Odisha.
- ❖ She has become the youngest Member of Parliament (MP) at the age of 25 years and 11 months.
- ❖ She defeated two-time BJP MP Ananta Nayak by a margin of 67,822 votes to win the Keonjhar Lok Sabha seat.
- ❖ Dushyant Chautala from Hisar Constituency in Haryana was earlier the youngest MP as he became MP at the age of 26 years.

## **Tapuk Taku**

- ❖ Tapuk Taku of National People’s Party (NPP) defeated his rival candidate in the Seppa East Assembly constituency of Arunachal Pradesh with a narrow margin of 29 votes.
- ❖ He contested and won against Ealing Tallang of BJP.
- ❖ The final count from the Postal Votes tilted the scales his favour.





### Postal Voting

- ❖ Postal voting is a type of voting in elections whereby Electronically Transmitted Postal Ballot Papers (ETPB) are distributed to electors and returned by post.
- ❖ Postal voting refers only to the “means” by which the ballots are submitted, not to the “method” by which the votes are counted.
- ❖ According to the Election Commission (EC) of India Postal Voting facility is available to a service voter — that is a voter having a service qualification.

### **Andhra Pradesh CM**

- ❖ YSR Congress party leader Jagan Mohan Reddy will be sworn-in as Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh on May 30, 2019 in Vijayawada.
- ❖ Jagan’s party had won 151 of 175 Assembly seats and 22 Lok Sabha seats out of 25 in Andhra Pradesh.
- ❖ He defeated incumbent CM Chandra Babu Naidu of Telugu Desam Party.
- ❖ He met PM Modi and requested him to accord Andhra Pradesh “Special Category Status”.

### Special Category Status (SCS)

- ❖ The concept of SCS was first introduced in 1969 by the 5th Finance Commission.
- ❖ It sought to provide certain disadvantaged states preferential treatment in the form of central assistance and tax breaks.
- ❖ Initially 3 states only Assam, Nagaland and Jammu & Kashmir were granted SCS.
- ❖ Arunachal Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Sikkim, Tripura and Uttarakhand were later added.
- ❖ But the 14th Finance Commission scrapped the ‘special category’ status for states, except for the North Eastern and three hill states (J&K, Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand).
- ❖ Instead it recommended increased “tax devolution” from Union to States from 32% to 42%.

### **Sikkim CM**

- ❖ The leader of Sikkim Karantikari Morcha (SKM) party Prem Singh Golay took over as the New Chief Minister of Sikkim.
- ❖ He beat 5-time Chief Minister Pawan Kumar Chamling of Sikkim Democratic Front.



- ❖ Sikkim as a state came into being in 1642 under the rule of Chogyal dynasty.
- ❖ In 1890 it came under British rule and became of protectorate state of British.

### **Odisha CM**

- ❖ Naveen Patnaik of the Biju Jana Dal (BJD) party will be sworn-in as the Chief Minister of Odisha for the fifth consecutive term on May 29, 2019.
- ❖ On the day of his oath taking, 6 to 7 lakh farmers under the state's KALIA scheme will receive the financial assistance of Rs 5000 through Direct Benefit Transfer.
- ❖ He has won 12 out of 23 parliamentary constituencies and 112 of the 146 Assembly seats in 2019.

### **Aroma Mission – Meghalaya**

- ❖ Meghalaya Chief Minister Conrad K. Sangma launched a new project called "Aroma Mission" to boost the cultivation of medicinal and aromatic plants.
- ❖ A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) has been signed between CIMAP and the MBDA (Meghalaya Basin Development Authority) for collaborative work on medicinal and aromatic plants.
- ❖ Central Institute of Medicinal and Aromatic Plants (CIMAP) is a frontier plant research laboratory of Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR).

## **PERSONALITIES, AWARDS AND EVENTS**

### **Goldman Environmental Prize**

- ❖ Six grassroots environmental activists have received the prestigious Goldman Environmental Prize.
- ❖ Goldman prize is also called the "Green Nobel Prize".
- ❖ 6 environmental activists from 6 continents were chosen.
- ❖ The prize was founded in 1989 by U.S. philanthropists Rhoda and Richard Goldman.
- ❖ Notable social activist Medha Patkar received this prize in 1992.
- ❖ She was awarded for her heroic fight against the Narmada Valley Development Project, Gujarat.
- ❖ 2019 Winners



Winner	Country
Bayarjargal Agvaantseren	Mongolia
Alfred Brownell	Liberia
Alberto Curamill	Chile
Jacqueline Evans	Cook Islands
Linda Garcia	United states
Ana Colovic Lesoska	North Macedonia

### Investigative Journalist Award

- ❖ Nileena M.S. of the 'Caravan magazine' was awarded the prestigious ACJ Award for Investigative Journalism, 2018.
- ❖ The ACJ Award comprises a trophy, citation and a cash prize of Rs. 2 lakhs.
- ❖ The Asian College of Journalism (ACJ) is a journalism school in Chennai.
- ❖ It was founded in 1994 by Indian Express group.

### Chevalier Award

- ❖ Former ISRO chairman A S Kiran Kumar was conferred with France's highest civilian award "Chevalier de l'Ordre national de la Lgion d'Honneur".
- ❖ He was recognised for his contribution to India-France space cooperation.
- ❖ The National Order of the Legion of Honour award was created in 1802 by Napoleon Bonaparte.
- ❖ This is the highest civilian award given by the French for outstanding service to France.
- ❖ This award is given regardless of the nationality of the recipient.

### PC Chandra Purashkaar 2019

- ❖ India's most reputed cardiac surgeon Dr. Devi Prasad Shetty was awarded 27th P.C. Chandra Puraskaar.
- ❖ This is the annual national award from the P.C. Chandra Group at Biswa Bangla Convention Centre.
- ❖ He is also known as 'The Man with Divine Hands'.
- ❖ In 2003, he has won Padma Shri and Padma Bhushan for medicine in 2013.



## **Robert Govender**

- ❖ G D Robert Govender, an Indian-origin journalist in South Africa was honoured with V K Krishna Menon Award 2019 in United Kingdom.
- ❖ He was awarded for his contribution as a pioneer of decolonised journalism.
- ❖ Robert Govender was born in South Africa in August 1930.
- ❖ He was the first journalist to call for international boycott of whites-only sports teams of South Africa.

### **About VK Krishna Menon**

- ❖ Krishna Menon was India's first High Commissioner to Britain.
- ❖ He served as Defence Minister of India from April 1957 to October 1962.
- ❖ He holds the record for longest speech (8 hours) before UN Security Council (UNSC).
- ❖ He was defending India's sovereignty over Kashmir in his UNSC speech, 1957.

## **Medal of Freedom**

- ❖ The United States President Donald Trump awarded Presidential Medal of Freedom to the golfer Tiger Woods.
- ❖ The 43-year-old Tiger Woods became fourth and youngest, professional golfer to receive prestigious highest civilian honor in US.
- ❖ Medal of Freedom was established by President Truman to honour extraordinary civilian accomplishments related to World War II.
- ❖ In 1963 the medal was re-established by President Kennedy.
- ❖ Once awarded, the medal of honour cannot be revoked.

## **Ramanuja Jayanthi**

- ❖ The birth anniversary of Ramanujar is also known as Sri Ramanuja Jayanthi.
- ❖ It is celebrated on the basis of Tamil solar calendar.
- ❖ It falls on Thiruvathirai Natchathiram day of Chithirai month. It is May 9 in 2019.
- ❖ His religious practices and the doctrines are carried in 2 most important Vaishnava centres:
  - Thiruvarangan Temple in Srirangam, Trichy
  - Venkateshvara temple in Tirupati, Andhra Pradesh

- ❖ The Vaishnavite philosopher-saint Ramanuja was also a revolutionary social reformer.
- ❖ He promoted the belief that every human is equal regardless of gender, nationality, caste, creed, race, social, cultural, and economic status.
- ❖ Ramanuja is the main proponent of Vishishtadvaita philosophy.

### **McCain Institute Award 2019**

- ❖ Head of the investigation team of the infamous Nirbhaya gang-rape and murder case, IPS officer Chhaya Sharma has been conferred with the 2019 McCain Institute Award for Courage and Leadership.
- ❖ In 2017, Chhaya has performed a crucial role in drafting Standard Operating Procedures and Guidelines to Combat Trafficking of Persons in India.
- ❖ This award is granted to those who manifest courage on behalf of human rights, humanitarian compassion, justice, freedom, and human dignity.
- ❖ Malala Yousafzai (2015) and Dikembe Mutombo (2016) are the other personalities won the award.



### **Sasakawa Award**

- ❖ The United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR) has honoured Pramod Kumar Mishra IAS with 'Sasakawa Award 2019 for Disaster Risk Reduction'.
- ❖ He is an Additional Principal Secretary to PM.
- ❖ It was announced during the 6th 'Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction' (GPDRR) 2019 meet held at Geneva, Switzerland.



- ❖ This is the most prestigious award of the United Nations in the area of Disaster Risk Management.
- ❖ United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR) and the Nippon Foundation created this award in 1989.
- ❖ The theme of the Sasakawa Award 2019 was 'Building Inclusive and Resilient Societies'.
- ❖ Other winners

Sidnei Furtado	Director of Department of Civil Defence, Campinas, Brazil
Bijal Brahmbhatt	Director of the Mahila Housing SEWA Trust of India

### **The Hindu**

- ❖ The Hindu Group has bagged two prizes at the prestigious International News Media Association (INMA) Global Media Awards.
- ❖ Second place was awarded in "Best Marketing Solution for Client" category for the Hindu.
- ❖ It bagged third place for 'Best Idea to Encourage Print Readership or Engagement'.
- ❖ The INMA is a global community of market-leading news media companies reinventing how they engage audiences and grow revenue in a multi-media environment.

### **Dag Hammarskjöld Award**

- ❖ Indian Police Officer Jitender Kumar, an Indian peacekeeper, is among the 119 military, police and civilian personnel who will be honoured this year with Dag Hammarskjöld Medal.
- ❖ It is a prestigious UN medal for courage and sacrifice in the line of duty.
- ❖ Officer Jitender Kumar sacrificed his life while working in an UN Stabilisation Mission in the war torn Central African country of Congo.
- ❖ Started in 1997, this medal is given in memory of Dag Hammarskjöld, the second Secretary-General of the United Nations.
- ❖ He died in a plane crash in 1961 while en route to cease-fire negotiations during the Congo Crisis.





### Indian Peacekeeping Missions

#### Fact Box

India is the fourth largest contributor of uniformed personnel to the UN peacekeeping.

India mission first assisted in Korea War, 1950-54.

39 personnel of the Indian contingent laid down their lives in Congo War 1960-64

It currently contributes more than 6,400 military and police personnel to the UN peace operations.

They serve in countries like Abeyi, Cyprus, Congo, Haiti, Lebanon, West Asia, South Sudan and Western Sahara.

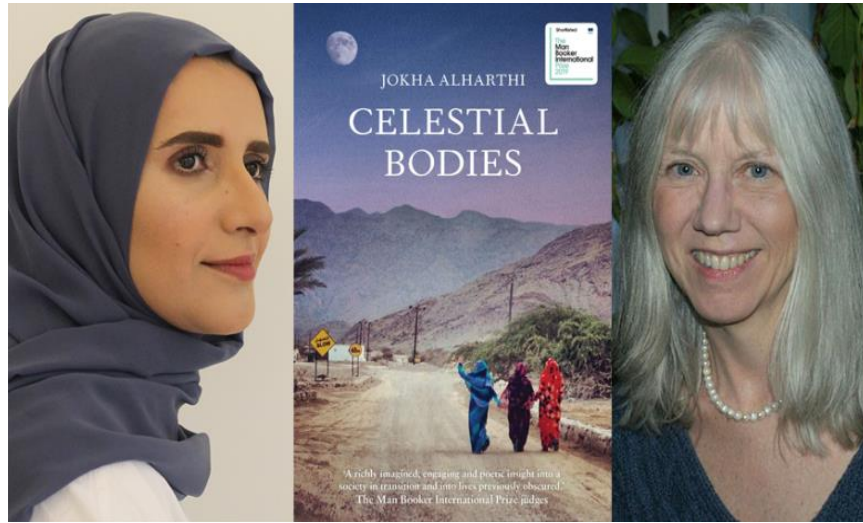
So far India has taken part in 43 Peacekeeping missions with a total contribution exceeding 180,000 troops

### **Rising Sun**

- ❖ Former Indian Foreign Secretary Shyam Saran is selected for Japan's Second Highest National Award called 'The Order of the Rising Sun, Gold and Silver Star'.
- ❖ The award was established by Japanese Emperor Meiji in 1875.
- ❖ It is awarded for an exceptional civil service or military merit.
- ❖ He will be conferred for his contributions in strengthening strategic ties and enhancing mutual understanding between India and Japan.
- ❖ He served as India's Foreign Secretary from year 2004 to 2006.
- ❖ In this period, he played an important role in elevating India-Japan relationship to a "Strategic partnership".
- ❖ His contributions include "India Festival" that was held in Japan in 1988.

### **Man Booker International Prize**

- ❖ Jokha Alharthi, an author from Oman has won the Man Booker International Prize for "Celestial Bodies".
- ❖ The novel was first published in 2010 as "Ladies of the Moon".



- ❖ She is the first Arabic-language writer to take the prize.
- ❖ The Man Booker International Prize is an international literary award sponsored by the Man Group.
- ❖ It carries a cash prize of 50,000 pounds or 64,000 US dollar for the winning title, shared equally between author and translator.
- ❖ Jokha Alharthi will split the cash prize with her UK-based translator, Marilyn Booth.
- ❖ The Man Booker Prize for fiction is also awarded by the same group but it is for books written only in English language.

### **UN's Highest Award**

- ❖ The UN's highest peacekeeping award "Captain Mbaye Diagne Medal for Exceptional Courage" is awarded posthumously to Malawian soldier Chancy Chitete.
- ❖ He sacrificed his life while fighting against a mob and saving his fellow comrade during an UN operation to control the spread of Ebola virus in Congo.

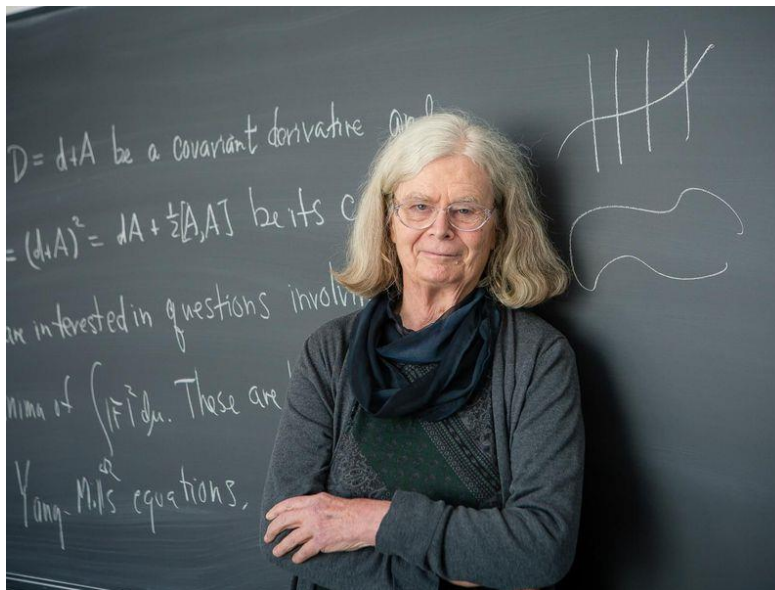
#### About the Award

- ❖ Captain Mbaye Diagne Medal for Exceptional Courage was established by UN in 2014.
- ❖ Captain Mbaye served with former UN Mission in Rwanda (UNAMIR) and saved thousands of Rwandans from death in 1994 genocide.



## Abel Prize

- ❖ Professor Karen Uhlenbeck of the University of Texas has been awarded the Abel Prize.
- ❖ It is one of the most prestigious awards in the field of mathematics. It is considered the Nobel Prize of Mathematics.



- ❖ She becomes the first and only woman to have won the award.
- ❖ It accompanies a prize of 6 million Norwegian Kroner (~£530,000).

## Origin

- ❖ The Abel prize was first proposed in 1899 by Sophus Lie.
- ❖ He proposed it after knowing that there would be no Nobel prize for Mathematics.
- ❖ Abel Prize was started in 2002.



- ❖ It was to commemorate the 100<sup>th</sup> birth centenary of Norwegian mathematician Niels Henrik Abel.
- ❖ The prize is named after him by The Norwegian Academy of Science and Letters. (established in 1760).

### **Shailesh Tinaikar**

- ❖ General Shailesh Tinaikar has been appointed by UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres as the commander of the UN Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS).
- ❖ He will succeed Lieutenant General Frank Kamanzi of Rwanda who will complete his UNMISS assignment this month.
- ❖ It is the second biggest peacekeeping operation.
- ❖ It was created in 2011 when South Sudan gained independence from Sudan.
- ❖ Mr Tinaikar will command over 16,000 peacekeepers, about 2,400 from India, in UNMISS.
- ❖ A 1983 graduate of the Indian Military Academy, General Shailesh Tinaikar is the recipient of the Sena Medal and the Vishisht Seva Medal for Distinguished Service.

### **Current Posting**

- ❖ He currently serves as the commandant of the Indian Army Infantry School, at Mhow, or Dr. Ambedkar Nagar.
- ❖ The Infantry School at Mhow, Madhya Pradesh is the largest and the oldest military training centre of the Indian Army.
- ❖ This institution also trains the National Shooting Team under the aegis of Army Marksmanship Unit (AMU) which is a part of Infantry School.

### **Lee Jong-wook Prize**

- ❖ The Director General of the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) Professor Balram Bhargava has won the 2019 Dr Lee Jong-wook Memorial Prize for Public Health.
- ❖ He was awarded at the 72nd World Health Assembly in Geneva.
- ❖ A Cardiologist at Delhi AIIMS, Dr. Bhargava was awarded for his achievements as a clinician, innovator, researcher and trainer.

### **About the Prize:**

- ❖ The Dr LEE Jong-wook Memorial Prize for Public Health was established in 2008.



- ❖ It is awarded to individuals, institutions, and governmental or nongovernmental organizations who have made an outstanding contribution to public health.
- ❖ The award consists of a plaque from the “Founder” and a sum of money which will not exceed US\$ 100 000.
- ❖ Other regular prizes awarded under WHO umbrella are

The Sasakawa Health Prize	Ihsan Dogramaci Family Health Foundation Prize
United Arab Emirates Health Foundation Prize	The State of Kuwait Prize for Research in Health Promotion

## 9 Dots Prize

- ❖ Indian writer Annie Zaidi was announced as the 2019 winner of Nine Dots Prize.
- ❖ The Nine Dots Prize is a prize for creative thinking that tackles contemporary societal issues.



- ❖ The name of the Prize references the nine dots puzzle – a lateral thinking puzzle which can only be solved by out of the box thinking.
- ❖ The Prize is sponsored by the Kadas Prize Foundation with support from University of Cambridge and Cambridge University Press.

## Global Asian of the year 2018-19

- ❖ Bengaluru-based medical doctor Hema Divakar was honoured with the 'Global Asian of the Year 2018-19' award.



- ❖ Hema received the award at the Asian Business & Social Forum 2019 under the 'In Service of the Society and the Nation' category.
- ❖ 'The Global Asian Of The Year' awards is the flagship annual awards initiative of Asia One magazine.

### **German Chemistry Prize - Ankur Patwardhan**

- ❖ 'Elsevier Foundation-ISC3 Green and Sustainable Chemistry Challenge' is an international competition recently held in Germany.



- ❖ Ankur Patwardhan from Pune has bagged the second prize in the competition.
- ❖ His project named 'Butterfly attractant for pollination and ecosystem health' is about the relation between chemistry and ecosystem.

### **Anita Bhatia - UN Deputy Executive Director**

- ❖ The United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres has appointed Anita Bhatia as the Deputy Executive Director of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) for Resource Management, Sustainability and Partnerships.
- ❖ Previously, Indian diplomat and a gender equality champion Lakshmi Puri had served as the Assistant Secretary-General of the United Nations and Deputy Executive Director of UN Women.



## SPORTS

### Marylebone Cricket Club (MCC)

- ❖ Former Sri Lanka captain Kumar Sangakkara was on May 1, 2019 appointed as the President of the Marylebone Cricket Club (MCC), England.
- ❖ Sangakkara has become the first non-British to head the Club.

#### History

- ❖ Marylebone cricket club was founded in 1787.
- ❖ MCC is the owner of the world's most famous cricket ground The Lord's.
- ❖ MCC is the guardian and copyright owner of the laws of the cricket.
- ❖ It governed England and Wales and world cricket till 1993.
- ❖ ICC took over world cricket management from MCC in 1993.

### Asian Road Para-Cycling Championships 2019

- ❖ Asian Road Para-Cycling Championships 2019 was held in Tashkent, Uzbekistan with participation of twenty-eight countries.
- ❖ Indian para cyclists won a silver and two bronze medals.
- ❖ Divij Shah has clinched his third consecutive silver medal in the C5 category.
- ❖ Gurlal Singh, Asian Para Games bronze medallist, became the only Indian cyclist to win a medal at the Asian Games level grabbed a bronze in the C4 section.
- ❖ Sudhakar Marathe, a Hand cyclist from Maharashtra has claimed bronze for India in H5 category.





### **Virgin Money London Marathon 2019**

- ❖ Indian marathon runner, Nitendra Singh Rawat finished 27<sup>th</sup> in 2 hours 15 minutes and 59 seconds in the men's Elite race of prestigious Virgin Money London Marathon 2019 at London, UK.
- ❖ This was the fourth fastest in his career and his second fastest time in this season.
- ❖ The 32-year-old Rawat has qualified for the World Championships to be held in Doha in September-October.
- ❖ It was won by Eliud Kipchoge of Kenya for record fourth time.

### **Asian Youth Women Handball Championship 2019**

- ❖ The 8th edition Asian Youth Women Handball Championship 2019 will be held in Jaipur from August 21 to 30.
- ❖ This is the first time Jaipur will host this prestigious tournament.
- ❖ Earlier in 2015, India hosted the event and finished at seventh place.
- ❖ This event will be organised by Asian Handball Federation (AHF).
- ❖ The tournament has been dominated by South Korea who has emerged champion in the all the seven editions of the tournament held so far.

### **Asian Squash Championships**

- ❖ Joshna Chinappa and Saurav Ghosal emerged champions in the Asian Individual Squash Championship held in Kuala Lumpur.
- ❖ For related content kindly read News dated 05.04.19 Link: <https://www.tnpscthervupettagam.com/squash/>

### **Boxing**

- ❖ Indian boxers finished with a haul of six medals at the 36th Feliks Stamm International Boxing Tournament in Warsaw, Poland.
- ❖ In 52 Kilogram weight category Gaurav Solanki beat England's William Cawley and won gold medal.
- ❖ In 60-kilogram weight category Kaushik beat Morocco's Mohamed Hamout and won gold medal.
- ❖ Other Indian boxers also clinched a silver and three bronze medals.

## Premier League

- ❖ The Manchester City won the English Premier League (EPL) football title for second successive year. Liverpool gained the second place in league.
- ❖ Also called 'The Premier League' the English Premier league was founded on 20 February 1992.



- ❖ It stands at the top level of the Football Pyramid in England.
- ❖ EPL is contested by 20 clubs and each team plays 38 matches overall (A team plays against 19 other teams both home and away matches).
- ❖ Each season runs from August to May.

## Player Tracking

- ❖ BCCI had introduced the software Athlete Management System (AMS) and GPS-enabled wearable devices to monitor the players.
- ❖ AMS was used to monitor player fatigue and injuries from the 2018 Asia Cup tournament onwards.
- ❖ Player management became extremely important during the long IPL Tournament.
- ❖ AMS relies on Artificial Intelligence. It can also keep a tab on the amount of sleep a player gets.
- ❖ BCCI now maintains an up to date database of each player's fitness levels and preparedness for the World cup 2019.

## Match Fixing and Corruption

- ❖ For the first time in World cup history, each participating team at upcoming ICC World Cup 2019 will have a dedicated anti-corruption officer attached to it.



- ❖ They will stay attached to the team from warm-up matches till the end of the competition.
- ❖ They will also be staying in same hotel as that of players and also travelling with them to training and matches.

### **Women Referees**

- ❖ The Asian Football Confederation (AFC) recently announced that for the first time in history an All-Female referee team will officiate in Men's match.
- ❖ They will officiate in Men's Continental Club Cup clash.
- ❖ Three Japanese female referees namely Naomi Teshirogi, Mokoto Bozono and Yoshimi Yamashita get that unique distinction.
- ❖ In 2014, Australian women Alysson Flynn and Sarah Ho became first female assistant referees in AFC Cup matches.

### **IAAF World Relays 2019**

- ❖ The International Association of Athletics Federations (IAAF) World Relays 2019 was held in Nissan Stadium, Yokohama, Japan.
- ❖ Total 43 nations participated in the two-day event.
- ❖ The event was organised by the International Association of Athletics Federation (IAAF).
- ❖ It is a biennial event, last time it was held in 2017 in Nassau, Bahamas.



### **New Badminton Format**

- ❖ The Badminton World Federation (BWF) has launched two new formats of badminton game namely



- Air Badminton
- Triples
- ❖ In contrast to traditional competitive badminton which is an indoor game the Air badminton is an outdoor game.
- ❖ The Air Badminton game and a new outdoor shuttlecock called Air Shuttle was launched in Guangzhou, China.
- ❖ The outdoor format will be played barefoot on an approved surface like sand and on courts of smaller dimensions.
- ❖ In Triples format, each team has 3 players with one mandatory female player.

### **Aravindh Chithambaram – Chess titles**

- ❖ [Aravindh Chithambaram](#) became the first Indian player to hold national titles in all three formats of the game simultaneously.
- ❖ Aravindh hails from Madurai.



- ❖ He recently won rapid and blitz crowns at the National level events held in Jalandhar
- ❖ Aravindh became the [National Open senior champion](#) (in classical format) held at Jammu in December 2018.

### **criiio Campaign**

- ❖ The International Cricket Council launched the criiio campaign on the eve of the men's World Cup.
- ❖ Criiio is a celebration of everyone playing cricket their way and world cricket wants to invite them into the criiio tribe.





## IMPORTANT DAYS

### International Jazz Day – April 30

- ❖ The International Jazz Day is celebrated every year on April 30.
- ❖ The day tries to highlight jazz and its diplomatic role of uniting people in all corners of the globe.
- ❖ The United Nations General Assembly formally recognized International Jazz Day on its official calendar in December 2012.
- ❖ UNESCO relates the celebration of Jazz Day to the 2005 “Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions”.

### May Day – May 01

- ❖ May 1 is marked as International Labour Day, also referred as May Day.
- ❖ The day celebrates labourers and the working class.
- ❖ In India the first labour day was celebrated in 1923 at Chennai by M. Singaravelar.
- ❖ Singaravelar founded the first trade union in India.
- ❖ He was also one of the founding members of Communist Party of India.

#### History

- ❖ Labour Day has its origins in the labour union movement in the United States.
- ❖ May 1 was chosen to be International Workers' Day to commemorate the May 1, 1886 Haymarket affair in Chicago.
- ❖ On that day there was a general strike demanding 8-hour workday instead of the usual 15-hour working day.
- ❖ Chicago Police fired to disperse the crowd and killed many.

### World Tuna Day – May 02

- ❖ World Tuna Day was observed on 2 May.
- ❖ The day aims to raise awareness about the importance of tuna and to promote more sustainable fishing practices.
- ❖ 2 May 2017 was the first internationally recognized World Tuna Day.
- ❖ In December 2016 the UN General Assembly voted to officially observe the day.





### **World Password Day – May 02**

- ❖ Every year World Password Day is celebrated on First Thursday of May.
- ❖ The day is meant to create awareness of the need for good password security.
- ❖ Intel Security took the initiative to declare the first World Password Day in May 2013.
- ❖ According to Avast Security, 50% of the connected global population uses the same password for multiple accounts.

### **World Press Freedom Day – May 03**

- ❖ World Press Freedom Day is observed every year on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of May.
- ❖ The theme of this year is “Media for Democracy: Journalism and Elections in Times of Disinformation”.
- ❖ The theme discusses
  - current challenges faced by media in elections
  - media’s potential in supporting peace and reconciliation processes.
- ❖ World Press Freedom Day was proclaimed by the UN General Assembly in December 1993 following recommendations of UNESCO.
- ❖ 3 May is the anniversary of the Declaration of Windhoek
- ❖ This anniversary is celebrated worldwide as World Press Freedom Day.
- ❖ Windhoek Declaration is a statement of press freedom principles declared by African newspaper journalists in 1991.

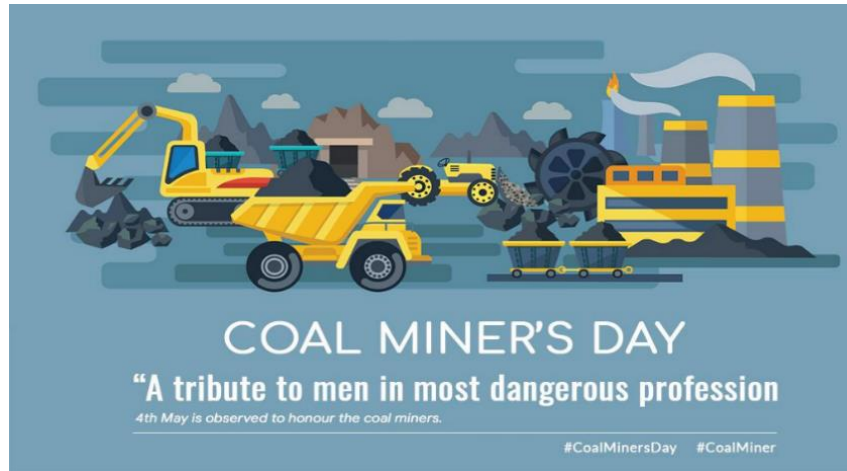
#### **Facts**

- ❖ According to a report by the International Federation of Journalists, 95 journalists have been killed in 2018 for defending freedom the press.
- ❖ 18 journalists have been killed since January 2019.
- ❖ India ranks 140<sup>th</sup> out of 180 countries in press freedom ranking released by Reporters sans frontiers.

### **Coal Miners Day - May 04**

- ❖ Coal Miners Day is observed every year on 4 May to highlight the toughest profession and the people working in coal mines.
- ❖ On this day several organisations, communities raise funds and awareness for other organisations in the coal mining area and workers.

- ❖ The annual celebration of Coal Miners Day began in 1975.



### **World Laughter Day – May 04**

- ❖ World Laughter Day takes place on the First Sunday of May of every year.
- ❖ The first celebration was on May 10, 1998, in Mumbai.
- ❖ The event was organised by Dr. Madan Kataria.
- ❖ He is the founder of the worldwide Laughter Yoga movement.
- ❖ The day intends to build up a global consciousness of brotherhood and friendship through laughter.
- ❖ The first World Laughter Day gathering outside India was held at Copenhagen, Denmark, in 2000.

### **International Firefighter's Day – May 04**

- ❖ International Firefighter's Day is observed on 4 May every year.
- ❖ It was instituted after a proposal was emailed out across the world on January 4, 1999 by Australia.
- ❖ On that fateful day 5 firefighters died in a bushfire in Australia.
- ❖ The day commemorates the lost lives of firefighters.
- ❖ It is dedicated to the fire fighters who risk their lives every day to save life and property.
- ❖ The red and blue in the symbol of International firefighter's day symbolises fire and water respectively.



### **World Athletics Day – May 07**

- ❖ The World Athletics Day is observed every year on May 7.
- ❖ The day aims to
  - popularize sports among the youth,
  - promote athletics as the primary sport in schools and institutions
  - encourage and introduce new talent and youngsters in the field of athletics.
- ❖ Primo Nebilo, former president of the worldwide athletics federation International Association of Athletics Federations (IAAF) introduced the day in 1996.

### **World Red Cross Red Crescent Day – May 08**

- ❖ World Red Cross Red Crescent Day is celebrated on 8 May each year.
- ❖ The theme of 2019 is “#love”.
- ❖ The day commemorates all the volunteers who have made unparalleled contribution to people in duress or in need.
- ❖ This date is the anniversary of the birth of Henry Dunant.
- ❖ He was the founder of International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) in 1863.
- ❖ He was also the recipient of the first Nobel Peace Prize in 1901.
- ❖ The first Red Cross Day was celebrated on 8 May 1948.
- ❖ The title became world Red Cross and Red Crescent Day in 1984.

### **World Thalassaemia Day – May 08**

- ❖ Every year 8 May is observed as ‘World Thalassemia Day’ globally.
- ❖ The theme for 2019 is “Universal access to quality thalassemia healthcare services: Building bridges with and for patient”.
- ❖ The day is observed to raise awareness about thalassemia, its prevention and measures to avoid its transmission among people.
- ❖ Thalassemia is an inherited blood disorder characterised by less haemoglobin (Hb).
- ❖ It is more common among people of Mediterranean, Southeast Asian ancestry and in African-Americans.



## **Time of Remembrance and Reconciliation for Those Who Lost Their Lives during the Second World War – May 08-09**

- ❖ In 2004, the UN General Assembly declared 8–9 May as a time of remembrance and reconciliation of the second world war and its victims.
- ❖ The UN expects all Member States to pay tribute to all victims of the Second World War on this day.
- ❖ The observance of this day aims to
  - save succeeding generations from the war
  - to settle all disputes by peaceful means in conformity with the Charter of the United Nations
  - to uphold international peace and security at all times.

## **World Asthma Day – May 11**

- ❖ World Asthma Day is observed every year on first Tuesday of May.
- ❖ An annual event is organised by the Global Initiative for Asthma.
- ❖ It aims to improve asthma awareness and care around the world.
- ❖ The inaugural World Asthma Day was held in 1998.
- ❖ The theme for World Asthma Day 2019 is “STOP for Asthma.”
- ❖ The STOP in the theme stands for Symptom evaluation, Test response, Observe and assess and Proceed to adjust treatment.

## **Global Road Safety Week**

- ❖ Fifth global road safety week is being celebrated between May 06 to 12, 2019.
- ❖ Theme for this year is “Leadership for road safety”.
- ❖ United Nation believes that global goals can be achieved only if precious life is safe.
- ❖ So, it has launched action through the ongoing campaign: Save Lives #SpeakUp.
- ❖ World Health Organisation (WHO) has released a report during road safety week.
- ❖ It states that road accidents are the major concern for death among people age group between 5 to 29 years.

### Fact Box

- Road accidents claim approx 1.35 million lives across the world every year.
  - Over 50 per cent of these deaths are among vulnerable road users:  
*Pedestrians, Motorcyclists and Cyclists.*
- Road traffic injury is the eighth leading cause of death among all ages.
- It is also the second leading cause of death among adolescents and young adults aged 15–29

### World Migratory Bird Day – May 11

- ❖ The World Migratory Bird Day is observed on May 11 of every year.
- ❖ It is an annual awareness-raising campaign highlighting the need for the conservation of migratory birds and their habitats.
- ❖ This year the theme of World Migratory Bird Day is “Protect Birds: Be the Solution to Plastic Pollution!”
- ❖ Plastic consumption by birds leads to a chronic feeling of hunger and starvation as it gives the sensation of having a full stomach without any nutritional value.
- ❖ The number of seabirds dying from the effects of plastic every year is currently 1 million.

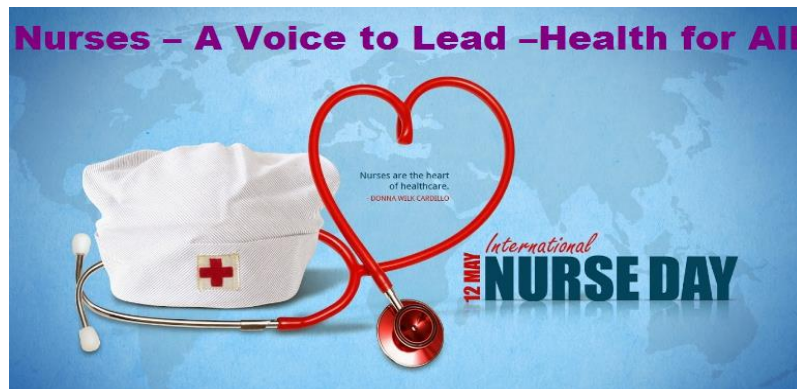


## **National Technology Day – May 11**

- ❖ National Technology Day is observed on May 11 across India.
- ❖ Operation Shakti-98 (Pokhran Nuclear Tests) was conducted on May 11, 1998.
- ❖ On this day India carried out three nuclear tests.
- ❖ Subsequently, the then Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee declared India a full-fledged nuclear state.
- ❖ Other achievements on May 11, 1998
  - Successful test firing of Trishul missile
  - Testing of India's first indigenous aircraft Hansa 3 in Bangalore
- ❖ This day celebrates the technical advancements and achievements of India.
- ❖ Technology Development Board of India commemorates the day by awarding individuals with National Award for their contribution to science and technology.

## **International Nurses Day - May 12**

- ❖ International Nurses Day is celebrated around the world every May 12.
- ❖ It commemorates the birth anniversary of Florence Nightingale also known as 'The Lady with the Lamp'.



- ❖ The theme for the International Nurses Day 2019 is 'Nurses – A Voice to Lead – Health for All'.
- ❖ International Council of Nurses (ICN) was first observed in 1965 after an officer with the US Department of Health, Education and Welfare proposed Nurses Day in 1953.
- ❖ In January 1974, 12 May was chosen to celebrate the day.





### **World Mother's Day – May 12**

- ❖ Every year Mother's Day is celebrated across the world on second Sunday of May month.
- ❖ This year it was celebrated on May 12.
- ❖ It is celebrated in honour of motherhood and to pay tribute to mothers all around the world.
- ❖ Writer Julia Ward Howe is credited with first thinking of the idea of Mother's Day in 1872.
- ❖ In 1908 Anna Jarvis campaigned for a national holiday in US in honour of her mother who was a community health advocate.
- ❖ Then in 1914 Former US President Woodrow Wilson signed a proclamation and designated Mother's Day on the second Sunday in May, as a national holiday to honour mothers.
- ❖ Later Mother's Day came to be celebrated worldwide.

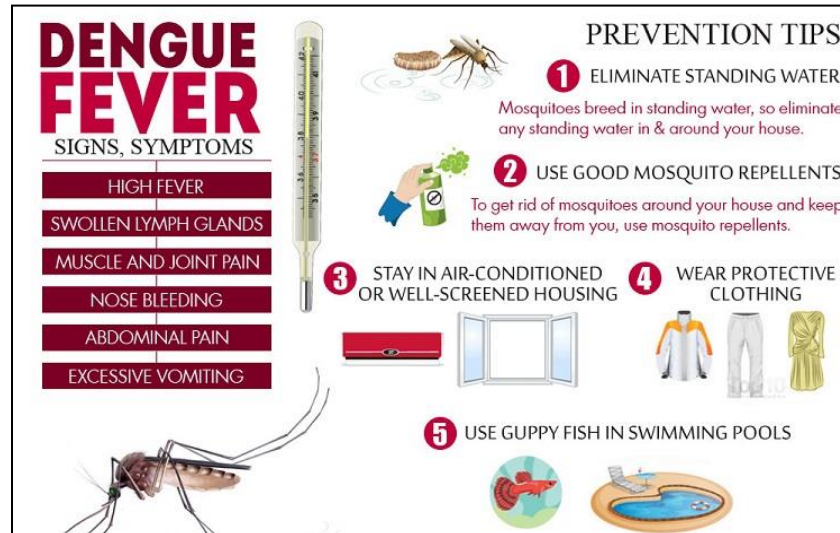
### **International Day of Families – May 15**

- ❖ The International Day of Families or IDF is observed on May 15 every year.
- ❖ The UN General assembly proclaimed the first such celebration in 1993.
- ❖ It is celebrated since 1996.
- ❖ The day reflects the importance that the international community attaches to families as basic units of society and the value of filial bonds.
- ❖ The theme of IDF 2019 is 'Families and Climate Action: Focus on SDG 13'.

### **National Dengue Day - May 16**

- ❖ Initiated by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, National Dengue Day is observed annually on May 16.
- ❖ It aims to raise awareness about the viral disease dengue and its preventive measures.
- ❖ In India, Directorate of National Vector Borne Disease Control Programme is the nodal centre for the surveillance and prevention of dengue.
- ❖ In 2016, the Government of India has launched a mobile app "India Fights Dengue".
- ❖ In 2017, maximum numbers of dengue cases were reported from Tamil Nadu.

- ❖ Dengue is caused due to the dengue virus – DENV, 1-4 serotype, which is transmitted by the bite of female *Aedes aegypti* (Linnaeus).



### **International Day of Light - May 16**

- ❖ Globally, May 16 is celebrated as International Day of Light.
- ❖ This the 2<sup>nd</sup> edition of the International Day of Light.
- ❖ UNESCO officially observes this Day so as to continuously appreciate light and for the exemplary role it plays in science, culture and art, education, sustainable development, medicine, communications, and energy.



### **International Day of Living Together in Peace - May 16**

- ❖ International Day of Living Together in Peace is celebrated on 16th May.
- ❖ This day was declared by the United Nations General Assembly in its resolution 72/130.

- ❖ This day is celebrated to promote peace, tolerance, inclusion, solidarity and understanding across the world.
- ❖ International Day of Living Together in Peace was celebrated for the first time on May 16, 2018.



### **World Telecommunication and Information Society Day – May 17**

- ❖ World Telecommunication Day has been celebrated annually on 17 May since 1969.
- ❖ It marks the founding of International Telecom Union (ITU).
- ❖ It also marks the signing of the first International Telegraph Convention in 1865.
- ❖ The day has been instituted by the Plenipotentiary Conference of ITU in 1973.
- ❖ In November 2005, the World Summit on the Information Society called upon the UN General Assembly to declare 17 May as World Information Society Day.
- ❖ Since 2006, May 17 is celebrated as both Telecom and Information Society day.
- ❖ Observance of this day aims to raise global awareness about the use of Internet and Information and Communications Technologies
- ❖ The theme of celebration for this year 2019 is 'Bridging the standardization gap'.



- ❖ The theme focuses on
  - the power of data for development
  - to turn complex data into actionable information
- ❖ The Plenipotentiary Conference is the top policy-making body of the ITU that decides the 4-year roadmap of the organization.

### **Vesak - the day of Full Moon – May 17**

- ❖ Vesak - the Day of the Full Moon in the month of May, is the most sacred day to millions of Buddhists around the World.
- ❖ This year it was observed on May 17.
- ❖ In 1999, the UN General Assembly recognized the Day of Vesak internationally to acknowledge the contribution of Buddhism to the spirituality of humanity.
- ❖ It was on the Day of Vesak that
  - Buddha was born
  - Also attained enlightenment
  - Also, in his eightieth year passed away.

### **World Hypertension Day – May 17**

- ❖ Every year 17 May is observed as World Hypertension Day (WHD).
- ❖ This is an initiative of the World Hypertension League (WHL), which is affiliated to International Society of Hypertension.
- ❖ The WHD was first inaugurated in May 2005.
- ❖ The purpose of the WHD is to promote public awareness of hypertension and to encourage citizens of all countries to prevent and control this silent killer, the modern epidemic.



- ❖ The theme of World Hypertension Day 2019 is "Know your numbers"
- ❖ The theme is meant to raise awareness about high blood pressure in people across the world.

### **World AIDS Vaccine Day – May 18**

- ❖ World AIDS Vaccine Day also known as HIV Vaccine Awareness Day, is observed annually on May 18.
- ❖ This day is observed to recognize the many volunteers, community members, health professionals, and scientists working to develop a vaccine to prevent HIV.
- ❖ The concept of World AIDS Vaccine Day is rooted in a May 18, 1997 speech made by the President Bill Clinton.
- ❖ The first World AIDS Vaccine Day was observed on May 18, 1998 to commemorate the anniversary of Clinton's speech and to stress the continued need for a vaccine to prevent HIV infection and AIDS.

### **International Museum Day – May 18**

- ❖ International Museum Day is celebrated annually on May 18.
- ❖ The day aims to raise awareness about the importance of museums as means of cultural exchange.
- ❖ The International Council of Museums organized the first International Museum Day in 1977.
- ❖ The theme of 2019 celebration is "Museums as Cultural Hubs: The future of tradition".



- ❖ The World's first public museum was founded in Britain in 1753.
- ❖ Started in 1851, the Government Museum or Madras Museum in Chennai is the second oldest museum in India after the Indian Museum in Kolkata.



## World Metrology Day – May 20

- ❖ World Metre Day is commemorated every year on May 20.
- ❖ The Metre Convention on 20 May 1875 established the International Bureau of Weights and Measures (BIPM).
- ❖ It provided the basis for a coherent measurement system worldwide.
- ❖ The theme for World Metrology Day 2019 is “The International System of Units – Fundamentally better”.



### 20 May 2019 - World Metrology Day

The new definitions of the SI base units  
have now come into effect!

- ❖ This theme was chosen because in November 2018 as the General Conference on Weights and Measures agreed for “revisions” to the International System of Units (the SI Units) which was fixed in 1875.
- ❖ The 7 base units of the SI system are

#### THE SEVEN FUNDAMENTAL UNITS

UNIT	QUANTITY	HOW IT IS/WILL BE DEFINED
Meter*	Distance	Based on speed of light
Kilogram**	Mass	To be based on Planck constant
Second*	Time	Based on radiation of caesium-133 atom
Ampere**	Current	To be based on an electron's charge
Kelvin**	Temperature	To be based on Boltzmann constant
Mole**	Amount of substance	To be based on Avogadro constant
Candela*	Luminous intensity	From efficacy of light of specific frequency

\*Current definition stands \*\* Being redefined

- ❖ Currently the way we measure four base units are redefined - kilogram, kelvin, mole and ampere.
- ❖ Here after the SI units will be expressed in terms of the following constants.





The seven defining constants of the SI are:

- the caesium hyperfine frequency  $\Delta\nu_{\text{Cs}}$ ;
- the speed of light in vacuum  $c$ ;
- the Planck constant  $h$ ;
- the elementary charge  $e$ ;
- the Boltzmann constant  $k$ ;
- the Avogadro constant  $N_A$ ; and
- the luminous efficacy of a defined visible radiation  $K_{\text{cd}}$ .

### **World Bee Day – May 20**

- ❖ World Bee day is observed on May 20.
- ❖ This day aims to raise awareness about the importance of pollinators, the threats they face and their contribution to sustainable development
- ❖ Bee day coincides with the birthday of Anton Janša.
- ❖ In the 18th century he pioneered modern beekeeping techniques in his native Slovenia.
- ❖ The UN Member States approved Slovenia's proposal to proclaim 20 May as World Bee Day in December 2017.

### **World Day for Cultural Diversity for Dialogue and Development 2019 – May 21**

- ❖ World Day for Cultural Diversity is annually observed on May 21.
- ❖ In 2001, UNESCO adopted the Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity.
- ❖ In 2002, UN declared May 21 to be the World Day for Cultural Diversity.
- ❖ The day provides us with an opportunity to deepen our understanding of the values of cultural diversity.

### **World Turtle Day – May 23**

- ❖ The World Turtle Day is observed on May 23.
- ❖ It was started in 2000 by American Tortoise Rescue (ATR) organisation.
- ❖ ATR is dedicated to the rescue, rehabilitation, adoption and protection of all tortoise and turtle species.
- ❖ The day was created as an annual observance to help people celebrate and protect turtles and tortoises and their disappearing habitats around the world.

## **The International Day for Biological Diversity – May 22**

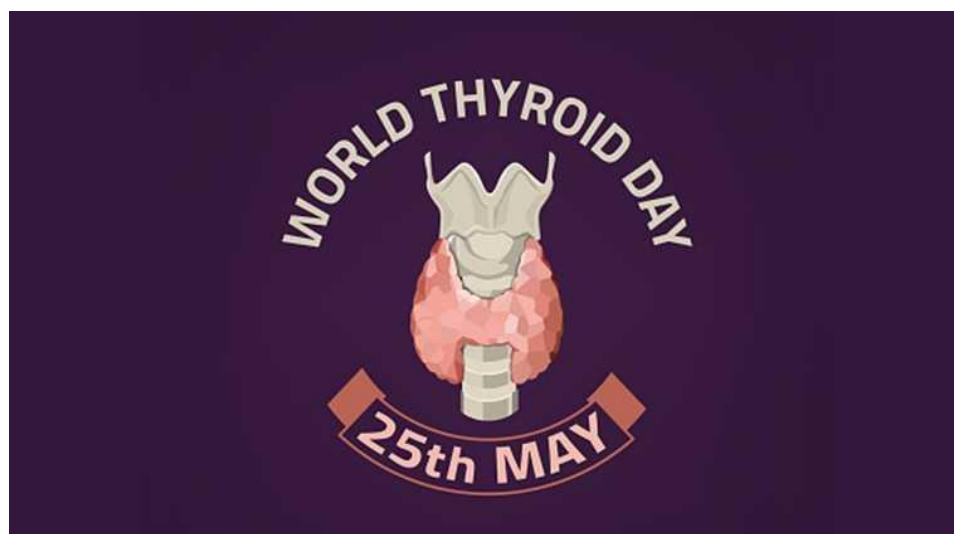
- ❖ The International Day for Biological Diversity (IDB) is observed every year on May 22.



- ❖ The theme for International Day of Biodiversity 2019 is “Our Biodiversity, Our Food, Our Health”.
- ❖ The day celebrates the diversity provided by our natural systems for human existence and well-being on Earth.
- ❖ In December 2000, the UN General Assembly adopted 22 May as IDB.

## **World Thyroid Day – May 25**

- ❖ World Thyroid day is observed every year on May 25.
- ❖ The year 2019 marked commemoration of 11 years of Global Thyroid Awareness.
- ❖ World Thyroid Day was established in 2008 as part of a campaign led by the American Thyroid Association and European Thyroid Association.





- ❖ This day aims to spread awareness on thyroid diseases globally, availability of new treatment and to focus on urgent need for prevention programs.
- ❖ The thyroid is a butterfly-shaped gland in the centre of the neck, is the master gland of metabolism.
- ❖ Untreated hypothyroidism can lead to severe complications such as infertility and heart disease.

### **International Missing Children's Day - May 25**

- ❖ Every year 25 May is commemorated as International Missing Children's Day.
- ❖ The forget-me-not flower is the emblem of Missing children day.
- ❖ In 1983, the U.S. President Ronald Reagan proclaimed May 25<sup>th</sup> as "National Missing Children's Day."
- ❖ In 2001, 25<sup>th</sup> May was first formally recognized as International Missing Children's Day (IMCD).
- ❖ The day highlights the issue of child abduction, honours the lost children who have never been found and tries to educate parents to protect their children.
- ❖ Global Missing Children's Network, a network of 23 countries is in the forefront of international child rescue.

### **Menstrual Hygiene Day – May 28**

- ❖ Menstrual Hygiene Day is an annual awareness day observed on May 28.
- ❖ It highlights the importance of good menstrual hygiene management (MHM).
- ❖ It was initiated by the German-based NGO, WASH United in 2014.
- ❖ The day offers an opportunity to actively advocate for the integration of MHM into global, national and local policies and programmes.
- ❖ Since 1947, Japan's Labour Laws provide women with menstrual leaves.
- ❖ On the occasion of this day, Tamil Nadu government has installed Rs.5 sanitary napkin vending machines at Government Multi Super Speciality hospital in Chennai.



### **Veer Savarkar Jayanti – May 28**

- ❖ Vinayak Damodar Savarkar's 136th birth anniversary was celebrated on May 28.
- ❖ Veer Savarkar was a freedom fighter, politician, lawyer, writer, social reformer and formulator of the Hindutva philosophy.



- ❖ Veer Savarkar was born on May 28, 1883 in Bhagpur village near Nasik in Maharashtra.
- ❖ Veer Savarkar founded the two-nation theory in his book 'Hindutva' calling Hindus and Muslims two separate nations.
  - In 1937, Hindu Mahasabha passed it as a resolution.
- ❖ The airport at Port Blair in Andaman and Nicobar's capital was renamed Veer Savarkar International Airport in 2002.

## The International Day of United Nations Peacekeepers – May 29

- ❖ The International Day of United Nations Peacekeepers is observed on 29 May of every year.
- ❖ The day offers a chance to pay tribute to the uniformed and civilian personnel's invaluable contribution to the peacekeeping works of UN.



More than a million people have served as UN peacekeepers since 1948.

- ❖ It honours more than 3,800 peacekeepers who have lost their lives serving under the UN flag since 1948.
- ❖ The first UN peacekeeping mission was established on 29 May 1948.
- ❖ It was mandated to monitor the Armistice Agreement between Israel and its Arab neighbours.
- ❖ The day is observed since 2003.

### Continuing relevance

- ❖ The theme for 2019 is “Protecting Civilians, Protecting Peace”.
- ❖ Protection of civilians has increasingly been at the heart of UN peacekeeping.
- ❖ More than 90% of UN peacekeepers are engaged in just 8 countries to protect civilians. They are

Abyei	Central African Republic
Darfur	South Sudan
Lebanon	Democratic Republic of the Congo,
Mali	Haiti





### **International Everest Day – May 29**

- ❖ Every year the International Mount Everest Day is celebrated on May 29.
- ❖ It is observed in memory of the first summit of Mt. Everest by New Zealand's Edmund Hillary and Nepalese Tenzing Norgay Sherpa on May 29, 1953.
- ❖ Nepal decided to observe the day as International Everest Day since 2008, when the legendary climber Hillary passed away.
- ❖ In 1852, Bengali mathematician Radhanath Sikdar calculated the height of Peak XV.
- ❖ It was an icy peak in the Himalayas and the tallest mountain known in the world.
- ❖ It was later named as Everest in honour of Sir George Everest, the Surveyor General of India from 1830 to 1843.

### **World No Tobacco Day – May 31**

- ❖ Every year, on 31 May, the World Health Organization (WHO) and global partners celebrate World No Tobacco Day (WNTD).



- ❖ The annual campaign is an opportunity to raise awareness on the harmful and deadly effects of tobacco use and second-hand smoke exposure.
- ❖ It discourages the use of tobacco in any form.
- ❖ Theme of 2019 – “Tobacco and lung health”



## MISCELLANEOUS

### #OneDay4Children

- ❖ International Cricket Council (ICC) partnered with UNICEF and announced #OneDay4Children.
- ❖ It is a tournament-wide campaign focussed on bringing the world of cricket together as one team to help build a better world for every child, at the World Cup series.
- ❖ There will be #OneDay4Children activity throughout all 48 matches of the event.
- ❖ The money raised will support UNICEF's work in cricket playing nations to help children learn to play and be healthy.

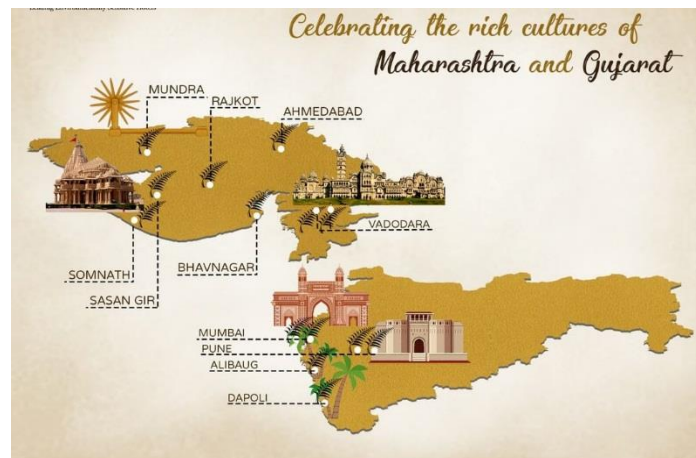


### Coronation of Thai King

- ❖ Thailand officially crowned its new King Maha Vajiralongkorn with 'Great Crown of Victory'.
- ❖ He became crown prince and official heir to throne in 1972.
- ❖ He is now declared as 'King Rama X of Thailand'.
- ❖ Chakri dynasty has been reigning since 1782 in Thailand.
- ❖ He is the 10th monarch of the Chakri dynasty.
- ❖ Thailand has a constitutional monarchy.
- ❖ The last coronation was held for the king's father Bhumibol Adulyadej in 1950.

## **Maharashtra Day' & 'Gujarat Day'- May 01**

- ❖ May 1 is celebrated as 'Maharashtra Day' and 'Gujarat Day'.
- ❖ In 1960, the Bombay Reorganization Act was passed by India's Parliament to divide the multilingual state of Bombay into Gujarat and Maharashtra.
- ❖ The legislation came into effect on May 1, 1960.
- ❖ The state of Bombay formerly comprised of speakers of different languages such as Marathi, Gujarati, Konkani, and Kutchi.
- ❖ During the mid-1950s, a movement known as the Samyukta Maharashtra Andolan started demanding a separate Marathi-speaking state.
- ❖ while Mahagujarat Movement aimed at the formation of a state for Gujarati-speaking people.
- ❖ The movements ended with the creation of the Bombay Reorganization Act.



## **Legal Education**

- ❖ "Father of Modern legal education" Padmashri Dr.NR Madhava Menon passed away in Thiruvananthapuram at 84 years of age.
- ❖ He was a pioneer in law education and established
  - National Law Schools in India
  - A 5-year integrated LLB (Bachelor of Laws) course
- ❖ He was founder director of 1987 established India's first National law school – the National Law School of India University (NLSIU), Bangalore.

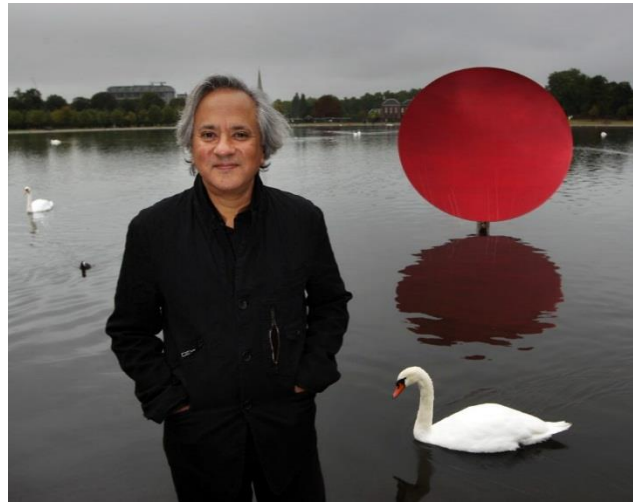
## SDG Advocates

- ❖ Indian actress Dia Mirza and Alibaba co-founder Jack Ma have been appointed by UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres as the new advocates for the UN's ambitious Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
- ❖ SDG advocates are expected to raise awareness, inspire greater ambition, solidify global political will and push for faster action to achieve SDG.
- ❖ A total of 17 global advocates from various countries have been appointed.



## Top Paid Artists

- ❖ The Hurun Research Institute has released the first edition of Hurun India Art List.
- ❖ It ranks contemporary Indian artists alive based on the sales of their works at public auction from April 2018 to March 2019.
- ❖ UK-based sculptor Anish Kapoor tops the list with arts sales estimated at Rs.168.25 crores.



- ❖ He is followed by artists Akbar Padamsee (Rs.45.84 crores) and Krishen Khanna (Rs.9.48 crores).
- ❖ Krishen Khanna is well known for his contribution to Tash ke Patte (Deck of Cards) a collaborative work by 100 artists around the World.

### **Voynich Manuscript**

- ❖ Gerard Chesire of the University of Bristol has finally claimed to have decoded the Voynich manuscript.
- ❖ He claims it to be proto-Romance language used in the Mediterranean during the Medieval period.
- ❖ It was compiled by Dominican nuns as a source of reference for Queen of Aragon, Spain.



### **Why is it unique?**

- ❖ Voynich is a 15th century illustrated codex written in an extinct language.



- ❖ It is written on vellum (calf skin) with text and illustrations.
- ❖ Cryptographers, linguists and computer programmes could not decipher it for nearly a century.

### **Vikalp Scheme**

- ❖ Indian Railway Catering and Tourism Corporation (IRCTC) had introduced a new scheme for waitlisted passengers called VIKALP.
- ❖ It is applicable to all waiting-list passengers irrespective of booking quota and concession.
- ❖ Waitlisted passengers can opt for a maximum of 7 alternate trains under the Vikalp scheme.
- ❖ Alternate trains which depart 30 minutes to 72 hours from the scheduled departure of the original train can be selected.
- ❖ Subject to train and berth availability waitlisted passengers can get a confirmed ticket.

### **World Record Sale**

- ❖ French artist Claude Monet's 1890 art work "Mueles" was sold for a record breaking price of \$110.7 million.
- ❖ It is regarded as one of the finest examples from Monet's acclaimed 'Haystacks' series of paintings.
- ❖ Mueles became the first work of an Impressionist Art to be sold for over \$100 million (Rs. 778 Crores) at an auction.

### **Impressionism**

- ❖ Impressionism is a style of painting associated mainly with French artists of the late nineteenth century.
- ❖ Impressionist painting seeks to re-create the artist's or viewer's general impression of a scene.





**An Impressionist  
Painting**

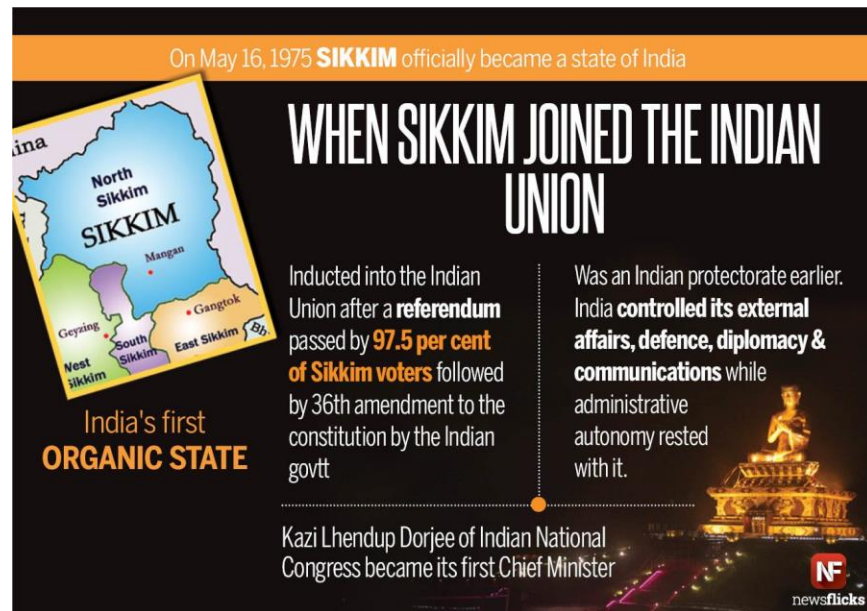


**Mueles Painting**

### **Sikkim's 44<sup>th</sup> Statehood Day - May 16**

- ❖ Sikkim celebrated its 44<sup>th</sup> Statehood Day on May 16.
- ❖ As per the arrangement of 1950, India assumed responsibility for communications, defence and foreign affairs, as well as the "territorial integrity" of Sikkim.
- ❖ On 14 April 1975, a referendum was held in which Sikkim voted to merge with India.
- ❖ On May 16, 1975, Sikkim was officially merged into the union of India as the 22<sup>nd</sup> state.
- ❖ Initially the 35<sup>th</sup> Amendment laid down a set of conditions that made Sikkim an "Associate State", a special designation not used by any other state.
- ❖ A month later, the 36<sup>th</sup> Amendment repealed the 35<sup>th</sup> Amendment and made Sikkim aa a full state.
- ❖ On April 29, 2019, the Chief Minister of Sikkim Pawan Kumar Chamling set the new record of being the longest-serving chief minister (23 years 4 months and 17 days).
- ❖ Last year, the state was conferred with the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation's (FAO) Future Policy Award 2018 also known as "Oscar for Best Policies" for being the world's first 100 percent organic state.





## Mind Control

- ❖ An Indian origin scientist in the US developed a technology that enabled a quadriplegic man to move his hand using just his thoughts.
- ❖ He has been awarded a \$20 million contract from US Defence Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA).
- ❖ The system has been named BrainSTORMS (Brain System to Transmit or Receive Magnetoelectric Signals).
- ❖ It could allow a soldier to put on a helmet and use his mind to control multiple unmanned aerial vehicles or dispose a bomb remotely.
- ❖ A Nano transducer is to be temporarily introduced into the body via injection so that the brain can communicate through a helmet-based transceiver.

## Nilgiris Mountain Railway (NMR)

- ❖ NMR is a 1,000 mm (3 ft 3 3/8 in) metre gauge railway.
- ❖ It was built by the British in 1908.
- ❖ It is operated by the Southern Railway and is the only rack railway in India.
- ❖ In July 2005, UNESCO added the Nilgiri Mountain Railway as an extension to the World Heritage Site of Darjeeling Himalayan Railway.



- ❖ Mountain railways of India (UNESCO World Heritage Site)
  - Darjeeling Himalayan Railway
  - Nilgiri Mountain Railway
  - Kalka–Shimla Railway

### **Murray Gell-Mann**

- ❖ The 1969-Nobel prize winning physicist Murray Gell-Mann has died at the age of 89 in New Mexico, USA.
- ❖ He devised a method for sorting subatomic particles into simple groups of eight (8) based on their spin, electric charge and other characteristics.
- ❖ He named this method “eightfold way” after Buddhist Eightfold Path to enlightenment.
- ❖ He was the first scientist who theorised “quarks” which forms the basis for our physical understanding of the universe.

### **SpiceJet – 100 planes**

- ❖ SpiceJet announced the induction of a Boeing 737, taking its fleet size to 100 aircraft.
- ❖ SpiceJet is the fourth domestic airline to achieve the feat after Air India, Jet Airways and IndiGo.
- ❖ Eight domestic carriers of India are Air India, IndiGo, SpiceJet, GoAir, Air India Express, Vistara, AirAsia and Alliance.



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